Football Euro 96 final: Czech Republic 1 Germany 2 (after extra time)

Bierhoff has golden touch

David Lacey at Wembley

A LONG-AWAITED touch of alchemy from a substitute, Oliver Bierhoff, won the European Championship for Germany on Sunday night in a Wembley final fit to set before the Queen. The golden moment owed something to a goalkeeper's shaking hand but it spared the tournament the agonies of an ultimate shoot-out.

Having come off the German bench to equalise almost straightaway, Bierhoff scored again in the fifth minute of sudden-death overtime to defeat a Czech Republic team whose stylish football had belied their earlier reticence.

Patrik Berger had given the Czechs the lead with a controversial penalty just before the hour. Bierhoff came on in the 69th minute and equalised three minutes later.

Then, after four-and-a-half minutes of extra-time, Bierhoff turned on a ball from Klinsmann and saw Kouba only half-save his shot, which had enough momentum to carry it into the net.

A mixture of celebration and confusion followed. As the ball went in a linesman's flag was raised for offside against Kuntz but the German bench erupted on to the field in exultation. Eventually the Italian referee Pierluigi Pairetto consulted his fellow official and decided that Kuntz had not been interfering with play. The goal stood.

So the Germans won the European title for the first time since 1980 and the third time in all. It was their first honour since reunification, Vogts's first success as national coach, and a triumph for German resilience and the will to win.

When the Czechs took the lead, Vogts's team looked in deep trouble. Already weakened by injuries and suspensions, they lost Eilts at the end of the first half. His absence left the defence badly exposed but Bierhoff's first goal changed everything and his second left the Czechs facing a void of disappointment.

The Czechs deserved some sympathy from a near-capacity crowd, for their ability to match the Germans on the counter-attack and the superior rhythm of many of their movements did much to make the final a better spectacle than many had expected.

Despite thin resources, Vogts still won the match — Klinsmann returned to the German attack and stayed on to the end but his injured calf restricted his movements. Ziege, on the other hand, was back to his best form.

The Czechs created two early chances but Berger and Poborsky scorned both, and Germany all but went ahead 11 minutes before half-time when Kuntz's volley beat Kouba but Rada hooked it clear.

In the 41st minute Kuntz had only Kouba to beat but the Czech bravely blocked his shot. A minute later Kuka dispossessed Eilts on the left to set himself up with a similar chance but Kopke emulated Kouba's save.

Eilts's final had another two minutes to run. On the stroke of half-time he missed a tackle on Nemec, fell awkwardly and was carried off. Bode replaced him for the second half.

Chance for chance, the Czechs were still Germany's equals and two minutes before the hour they were ahead. Kuka won an important header to find Poborsky, who advanced towards the right-hand corner of the penalty area, where Sammer made a lunging challenge outside the 18-yard line.

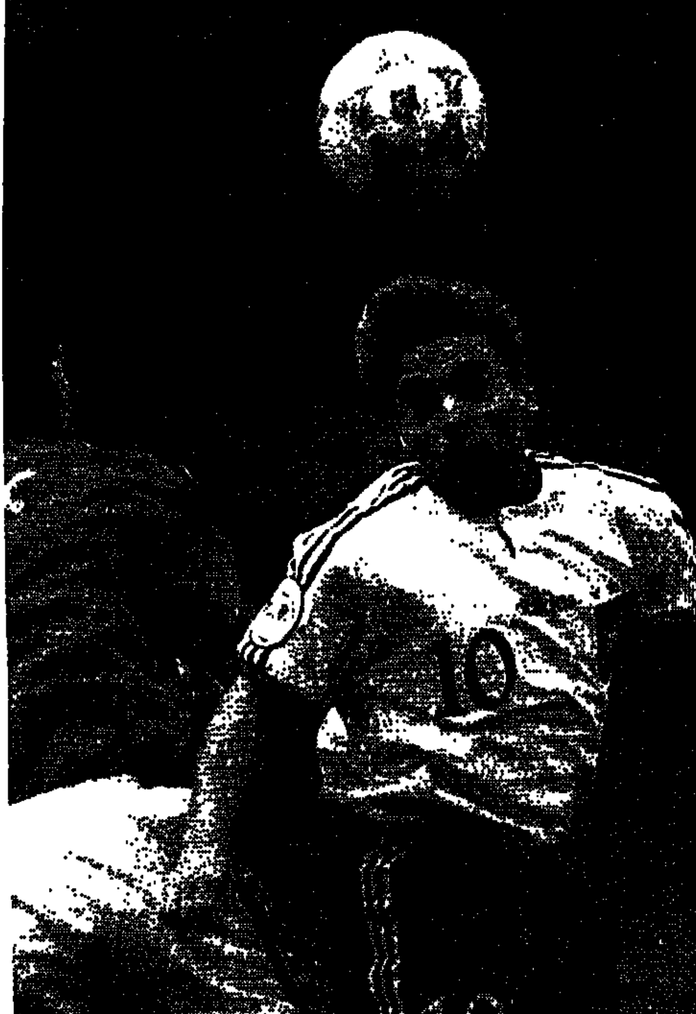
He made minimal contact, if indeed any at all, but Poborsky flew through the air into the area, the penalty was awarded amid German protests and Berger, Sammer's Borussia Dortmund team-mate, drove in the spot-kick.

Eilts was now badly missed and Helmer and Sammer were cautioned for panic-stricken body-checks. Enter Bierhoff. Within three minutes Ziege floated over a free-kick from the right and who else but Bierhoff should get on the end of it to head the scores level?

Germany grew stronger towards the end of normal time. Only a superb tackle by Rada denied Klinsmann, and Kopke did well to push wide a shot from Smicer, who had come on for Poborsky.

Somehow one knew that extra-time would not go the distance, and so it soon proved. Twenty years after losing a European Championship final to Czechoslovakia in a penalty shoot-out Germany had achieved some redress.

Uefa is unlikely to abandon the sudden-death principle now. It is sadistic but on Sunday night, for the first time in the tournament, it did the trick.



Ahead of the game . . . Germany's Thomas Hassler in the midst of the midfield dogfight at Wembley PHOTOGRAPH: NEAL SIMPSON

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria

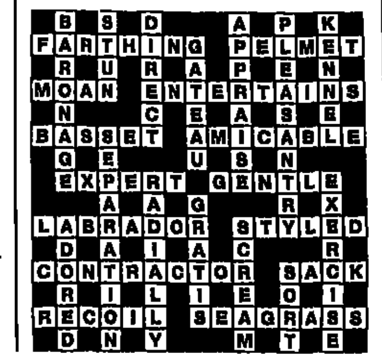
Across

1 See 20
4 Space for pulp developed in the dark? (8)
8 Everywhere it's absolutely finished business (3, 4, 3, 4)
10 True needs work around St. David's day (8)
11 English girl, Italian boy, and genuine student missing (6)
12 Chopper needed when there's decay on a tree (9)
15 When a boy's about like 17 and 23 (5)
17 Philosopher of the first degree with painter (5)
18 Novel structure in which a companion to the French, Mary Queen of Scots, was held (9)
19 Plant a runner, perhaps, put in as well (6)
21 Look into questionable firsts with a lot of bloomers (8)
24 Bauxite mixed with shingle may be soon put out (14)
25 One sees perfection — one is older, possibly (8)
26 Money for jam? (5)

Down

1 Give executors the go-ahead with note about including an insect, an expert flier (5, 7)
2 Muslim claim: is it flexible? (9)
3 Not dead meat? (5)
4 A break in the post for dispersing files (4'1-4)
5 Like this little house in London (4)
6 Bitter end, nearly, when it's tranquil outside (9)
7 Ancient bishop at ancient city creates a stink (5)
9 Corridor for drugs going to stall if not kept up (7, 5)
13 Equestrian event: only a trip will spoil it (4, 5)
14 A device on a banner is better than one on gold (9)
16 Home base keeps brother or sister out of sight (9)
20, 1 across Clue for girl student: 17, 23, 3, 19, 4 across 15 26, etc. (5, 5)
22 King — of Israel — and harlot (5)
23 Gives incentives, say, with strings (4)

Last week's solution



Cycling Tour de France

Sprint start hit by go-slow

William Fotheringham in Den Bosch

THE last time the Tour started in Holland, in Leiden in 1978, the organisers ruled that the prologue time-trial should merely be an exhibition race after torrential rain made the cobbled course into a skating rink. Eighteen years on, and one day after an uneventful prologue won by Alex Zülle, the 197 cyclists effectively made a similar decision over a road stage.

They did this with what amounted to a collective go-slow over the most dangerous opening stage in recent years. Before Sunday's 130-mile circuit of this southern Dutch town, the whole field had one thing on their minds: staying upright.

Paradoxically, the danger came from measures taken to protect cyclists and pedestrians from cars in one of the most densely populated parts of Europe. Awkwardly placed traffic islands and roundabouts, kilometre-long "rumble" strips of bricked road, sleeping policemen and cobbles made for a course which would have taken a bloody toll had the riders decided to race from start to finish.

Mario Cipollini, the king of the sprinters, crossed the line in third but was later relegated to 37th place, the second blow to his Tuscan pride in two days. After the prologue he was fined SwF50 ($40) for wearing a pair of strikingly crimson shorts to match his Italian national champion's jersey. His crime on Sunday was to have cut up Frédéric Moncassin 250 metres from the line, but poetic justice was done when the Frenchman found his second wind and came through to win.

The days' final three miles showed what might have been if the racers had had a course on which it was safe to race. Prominent at the front was Miguel Indurain, all too aware that crucial seconds can be lost in this kind of hectic finish. Indeed the redoubtable Swiss Tony Rominger dropped 9sec and Chris Boardman 15sec — falling from second to eighth overall — to the other favourites, who all finished in the lead group with Big Mig.

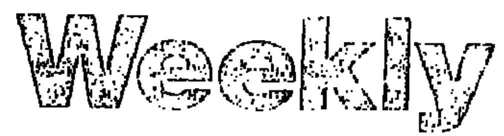
Indurain was probably also keen to show that the 12sec he lost to Zülle in the prologue, where all the serious contenders apart from Laurent Jalabert finished ahead of him, came from taking the slippery corners with caution rather than any human weakness on his part.

Meanwhile, Spanish team ONCE were told that the aerodynamically sophisticated time-trial bikes they used on Saturday were now banned and that the team faced a SwF10,000 ($8,000) fine — even though team members had been using them in competition since February.

William Fotheringam is features editor of Cycling Weekly

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The **Guardian**



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Week ending July 24, 1996

UN digs up Bosnia war crimes site

Julian Borger in Cerska

FORENSIC investigators from the United Nations used a mechanical digger to remove the topsoil from a northern Bosnian hillside this week as work began to exhume thousands of victims of last year's Srebrenica massacre.

The use of an industrial-size digger reflects the scale of the task. In what is probably the worst atrocity Europe has witnessed since the second world war, Bosnian Serb separatists are thought to have executed most of the 8,000-strong adult male population of Srebrenica after they overran the Muslim enclave exactly a year ago. The exhumation of bodies is expected to take three months and will concentrate on 12 suspected mass graves.

It began on a stifling hot afternoon on Sunday as a dozen hired Serb labourers cleared undergrowth from a hillside beside a dust track near the hamlet of Cerska, 30km northwest of Srebrenica. The digger manoeuvred down the slope and began scooping away the topsoil. The area had earlier been checked for mines.

Tribunal investigators — working from the testimony of survivors — found the remains of four bodies when they dug three small exploratory holes at the Cerska site in May. They have no doubt it is a mass grave and believe they will find many more bodies this week. "I'm confident we'll get to the evidence that's there," said William Haglund, one of the UN team.

The UN hired Serb labourers from the Sarajevo area to do much of the manual work. The workers walked up the dirt track to Cerska carrying hoes, spades, and picks, and pushing wheelbarrows. They refused to talk to the press and remonstrated with photographers. Many Bosnian Serbs view collaboration with The Hague war crimes tribunal as treachery.

UN investigators believe Muslim prisoners, caught last July while trying to flee Srebrenica, were lined up on the roadside, shot and pushed into pits in the embankment below. Eyewitness accounts and satellite photographs at the time suggest similar mass executions occurred north and west of Srebrenica.

More Srebrenica Muslims were killed in ambushes as they tried to escape to government-held territory, and left to rot where they fell. In a separate UN initiative, a Finnish-led team began removing those bodies from a hillside near Kravice, 10km north of Srebrenica.

The human remains exhumed around Srebrenica will be transported in refrigerated trucks to the Bosnian government-held town of Tuzla, where they will be examined in a special morgue.

Three thousand men from Srebrenica are known to have been killed. The missing 5,000 are presumed dead.

The remains recovered in the next three months are expected to provide ample evidence of atrocities, but it is unlikely that many of the remains will be identified.

The main bottleneck in the tribunal's work has been the refusal of the Bosnian Serbs to hand over suspects such as their leader, Radovan Karadzic, and their military boss, General Ratko Mladic. However, international pressure was growing this week for tougher action against the Bosnian Serb leaders indicted for war crimes, including genocide.

Officials of the Contact Group on Bosnia — the US, France, Britain, Russia and Italy — were due to meet in London on Wednesday to consider what to do. Options range from a military operation to seize the two men to economic sanctions against the Republika Srpska.



Victims of slaughter: Bosnian Muslim families try to identify bodies in Svrake, near Sarajevo, dug out by war crimes investigators who say they were executed by Serb forces in 1992 PHOTOGRAPH. PETER ANDREWS

Ulster tense as loyalist violence flares

David Sharrock

SERIOUS sectarian violence broke out in Northern Ireland this week as Unionist anger soared over the police's refusal to allow Orangemen at Drumcree to parade past nationalist areas in Portadown. Scores of vehicles were hijacked and set alight. In south Belfast police fired plastic bullets at rioters.

By late Monday, on the second day of the stand-off between police and Protestant marchers, almost every town in Northern Ireland had roads blocked by loyalists. The international airport and Larne, Ireland's busiest harbour, were sealed off.

The Portadown stand-off came as police blockaded an Orange Order church parade on the outskirts of the staunchly loyalist town, which was the scene last year of another ugly confrontation between police and marchers. Last year's march went ahead after residents of the overwhelmingly Catholic Garvaghy Road gave their reluctant permission to allow the Orangemen to complete their 189-year-old traditional route. This year there is no evidence of a mood of compromise.

Out of anger that a traditional Orange march was being blocked, the main Unionist parties pulled out of the all-party talks at Stormont in another sign that the "peace process" is expiring.

On Sunday, a taxi driver was shot in the back of the head after being called out in Lurgan. Police said they believed the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force was responsible for Michael McGoldrick's death.

● German police issued an arrest warrant for Robert Dickson, aged 31, wanted for questioning about the recent IRA mortar attack on the British army barracks at Osnabrück.

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

International Court fudges nuclear arms ruling

David Fairhall and Richard Norton-Taylor

THE use of or threat to use nuclear weapons in war would "generally" be unlawful, the International Court of Justice said this week. But it avoided ruling on whether such arms should be banned in an extreme case of self-defence when a state's survival was at stake.

The Hague court made the surprise rulings in response to requests from the UN General Assembly and the World Health Organisation, as it emerged that the commanders of Britain's Trident nuclear missile force would have ignored the court's ruling whatever its findings.

"If the court were to deliver an adverse opinion it would be ignored by the nuclear powers," Captain David Humphrey, the chief naval judge advocate, advised earlier this year. In a private legal opinion seen by the Guardian, he said it was "inconceivable . . . that the nuclear powers would be presently prepared to relinquish possession of nuclear weapons".

He argued that there was no "specific rule of international law, expressed or implied, which outlaws the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons *per se*".

The court had been asked by the General Assembly for an advisory opinion on whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons is "in any circumstance permitted under international law".

Its ambivalent answer, decided on the casting vote of the president after the court split 7-7, was regarded as disappointing by some anti-nuclear campaigners. They had hoped it would be a first step to getting nuclear arms banned in the same way as chemical and biological weapons. Nevertheless, it is widely regarded in the international community as a significant development in emerging post-cold war jurisprudence.

The court's non-binding opinion was decided by a casting vote from its Algerian president, Mohammed Bedjaoui. The judges finally declared: "The threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflicts, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law."

Forty-three governments made written submissions and 22 testified during 11 days of hearings. Australia and New Zealand led the call for nuclear arsenals to be outlawed.

War criminals at large poison peace in Bosnia

THE CONTINUED presence in Bosnia of Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and other indicted war criminals is poisoning the peace process, threatening the forthcoming elections, and undermining the authority and viability of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

UN Security Council Resolution 1031 charged the International Implementation Force (I-For) with ensuring compliance with the Dayton peace agreement, which includes a requirement that all parties co-operate with the tribunal. Article 29 of the tribunal's statute sets forth the various forms of co-operation that are due, including "the identification and location of persons", "the arrest or detention of persons", and "the surrender or the transfer of the accused to the international tribunal".

With the Bosnian government threatening to pull out of the elections if Karadzic and Mladic are not apprehended, and Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone expressing increasing concern about the fate of the tribunal without their apprehension, securing the arrest and surrender of these two mass murderers should be the Western governments' top priority in Bosnia.

However, Western leaders continue to block the use of I-For troops to arrest indicted war criminals. Indeed, failure to bring these men to trial places many more lives at risk in Bosnia and elsewhere, by sending the signal that there is no price to be paid for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, whether committed against civilians or international troops.

The presence in office of the individuals responsible for massive abuses over the past four years has ensured that hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people cannot return home, and that political opportunities for anyone but hard-line nationalists are sharply limited. Freedom of the press and assembly is severely curtailed and violence against ethnic minorities and opposition figures is on the rise. National elections — a key step in the peace process — cannot meaningfully take place while Karadzic and Mladic remain at large.

We urge European heads of state to order the troops under their command to make an immediate and urgent priority of locating these fugitives and identifying circumstances when I-For can arrest them on favourable terms.

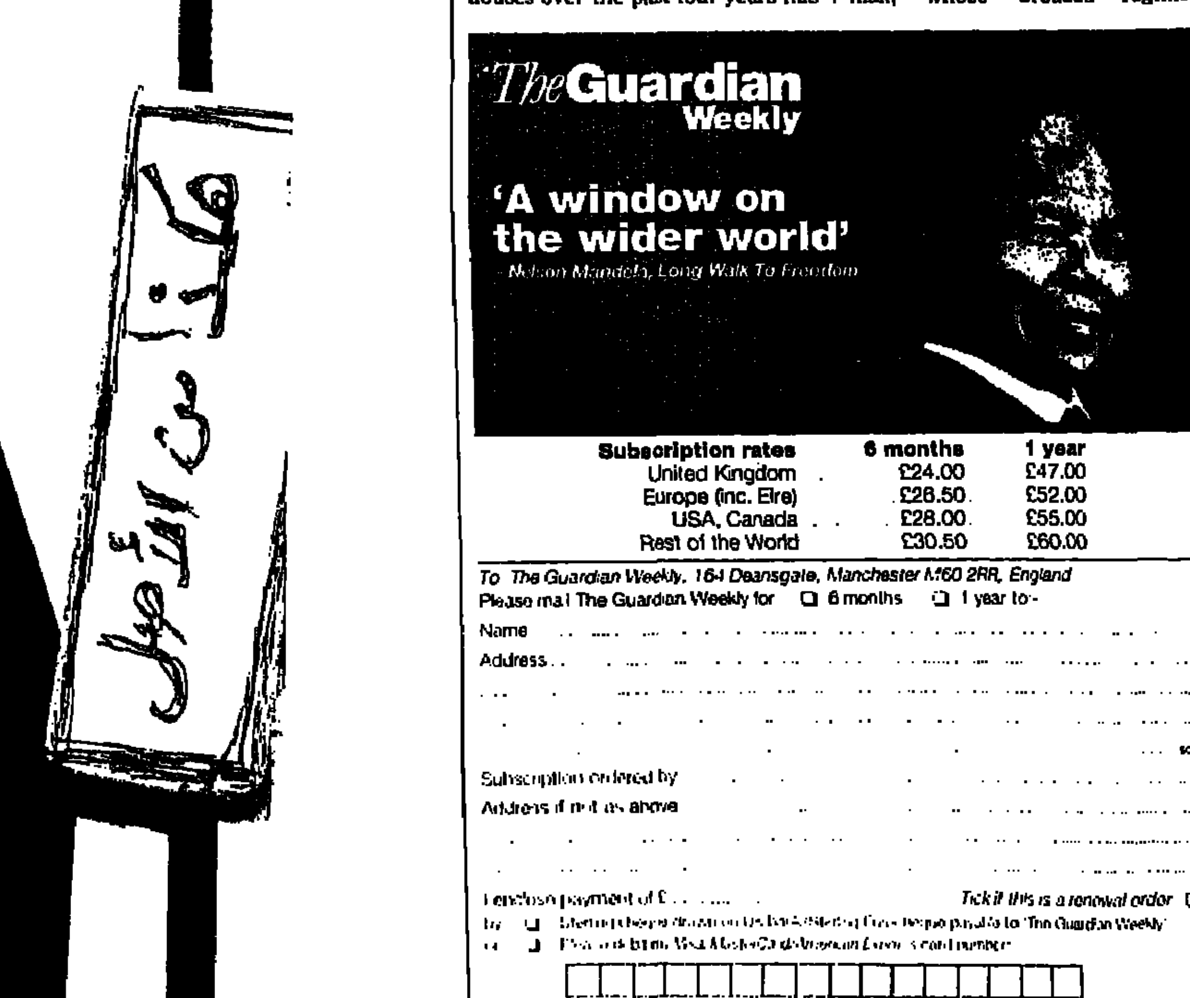
Jan Willem Bertens, Willy de Clerq, Baroness Caroline Cox, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Otto von Habsburg, (Prof) Jasminka Kavaric, Glenys Kinnock MEP, Bernard Kouchner, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Michel Rocard, Sir David Steel, Simon Wiesenthal, and 178 others, c/o Human Rights Watch, London

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I CANNOT understand how anybody who believes in the peace process in Bosnia can imagine that a one-sided action by I-For against Karadzic and Mladic will increase the chance of the present armed truce lasting beyond the end of the year (A commitment to Bosnia, July 7). I do not doubt that there is a strong legal case against the two warlords, but the size of their following among the Bosnian Serbs will increase, not decrease, if the West continues to apply such hypocritical double standards.

Until such time as Franjo Tudjman, whose Croatian regime forcibly evicted 300,000 Serbs from Croatia, murdered thousands of Krajina Serb civilians, persecuted the Italian minority in Istria, and, via proxies, massacred the Muslims of Mostar, is treated as a war criminal and not a world statesman, there seems little hope that the Serb people will abandon the militaristic nationalist leadership that led them to disaster in the 1990s.

(Dr) Tobias Abse,
Goldsmith's College, London



Cover-up over Indonesia

WHAT A wry coincidence that you report (July 7) the terrible death of Veronica Guerin in Dublin on June 26 and note that more than 20 journalists around the world have been assassinated since 1996, and carry in the same issue the news of Greg Sheridan's finding that six Australian journalists who died in East Timor in 1975 were (probably) killed by Indonesian troops — brutality the Suharto government has denied for 21 years.

That is a disgracefully long delay in even partial truth-telling, and it's unlikely we would have it now but for the extraordinary, single-handed fight of Shirley Shackleton, whose 29-year-old husband, Greg (Channel 7 reporter), was one of the victims.

Nothing could demonstrate more humiliatingly to the world Australian governments' fundamental terror of arrogant, Indonesian military government (18 million people against nearly 200 million) than their desperate cover-up of this, among other atrocities, since abandoning West Papua to Indonesia's invasion in 1962.

One might have hoped this revelation would end a whole generation of shameful, diplomatic pussy-footing; but Alexander Downer, our bumbling new foreign minister, gives every sign of resuming the time-dishonoured stance, instead of demanding Jakarta's co-operation in establishing the truth at last. Unfortunately, the Australian press continues to do the same: Murdoch's Australian (whose editor-in-chief, Paul Kelly, happens to be on the board of the Australia-Indonesia Institute) says "the matter should now be considered closed".

By submitting meekly to Indonesian high-headedness, our cowardly government and press must share in international responsibility for both the Dili massacre and the fate this year of two of the 24 hostages of OPM rebels desperate for the world attention they deserve and have been deprived of.

Noel McLachlan,
Albert Park, Victoria, Australia

Righteous travellers

I HAD planned to visit Burma this summer until reading Catherine Bennett's article (Why the right people choose to stay home, June 23) about travellers supporting dictatorships. Instead I chose Europe. But since the British and French supply the weapons that keep the dictatorships afloat and the Germans refuse to take in any more refugees, I had to cancel that trip, too. America and China, of course, were out of the question. I then decided to visit some friends in the Japanese countryside until realising that these are the very people who are stripping southeast Asia of its hardwood forests.

This summer I will be locking myself in my apartment with a three-week supply of groceries. Perhaps I will find an Internet web site for disgruntled homebodies where Catherine Bennett and I can congratulate ourselves on our self-righteous isolationism.

Tom Weverka,
Tokyo, Japan

SO Catherine Bennett thinks we should all give up being tourists and reading travel guides, and just let the journalists tell us all about all those terrible places. I imagine those nasty despots will not balk at the loss of trade, since they will be relieved to know they only have to put up a front for a few of the privileged profession. No nosy foreigners will be poking their noses in trying to learn about the culture or make friends with the natives. Perhaps we can all consult the Internet for the current locations we are supposd to visit or not visit before booking a holiday.

Which democratically minded journalist will edit and update it?

Angela Rogers,
Bandung, Indonesia

Silence of intellectuals

ERIC HOBSBAWM bemoans the fact that "a wide gap now separates the politicians of the British Labour Party from the intellectuals of the left" (If the truth be told, June 30). However, he admits the gap is not about the party's political stance. Only "a few palaeolithic sectarian survivals" would question that. If the left "must fall back on pragmatic policies", what is the role for the intellectuals? It seems they are there to speak the unspeakable: ". . . in political situations which dare not speak their name, there is a role for . . . Labour intellectuals . . ."

What does this mean? We shouldn't question policy, just speak out about "the unleashing of market forces"? I thought intellectuals engaged in understanding, thinking, analysing and reasoning. I see little of this in Hobsbawm's article, in which he concedes that the intellectual stuffing has been knocked out of the left over the past 20 years. If this is his idea of a comeback, God help us.

Tim Heffernan,
Toronto, Canada

TONY BLAIR'S decision to impose a referendum on a Welsh assembly and a Scottish parliament is an affront to the people of these countries. It is yet another example of the Labour leadership running scared of the Conservatives and bowing to the agenda of a party which is completely isolated on this issue in both Wales and Scotland.

The Labour parties of Wales and Scotland had already decided to press ahead with plans for devolution without the need for a referendum. The only bodies entitled to change this decision are the Welsh and Scottish conferences of the party.

The only people who have welcomed this move are those within the Labour party who oppose any kind of Welsh assembly or Scottish parliament. The referendum will be used as a delaying tactic by such opponents and delay the establishment of the Welsh and Scottish bodies.

Annabelle Harle, Ceri Evans,
Cardiff, Wales

Briefly

ON THE front page of the Guardian Weekly, Matthew Engel (Mirror back on the warpath, June 30) rightly condemns the Daily Mirror for its tasteless treatment of Germany in the European Championship. But on the back page is the headline: Seaman's handiwork sinks Armada. Not in the same league as the Daily Mirror, I agree, but rather thoughtless and clichéd all the same.

A Spanish colleague commented that he would never have expected the Guardian Weekly of all papers to trot out such a weary old historical stereotype, even for the sake of a pun. After all, if England had beaten Germany, you wouldn't have had "Seaman sinks U-boats", would you?

Guy Hill,
Madrid, Spain

THE British Red Cross advertisement (What the women of Phnom Penh are wearing, June 9) is misleading. On the streets of Phnom Penh you are much more likely to see amputee soldiers, with or without prosthetics.

Most female land-mine victims incur their injuries in remote rural areas; they lack the resources and support to come to Phnom Penh for treatment, supposing they know about prosthetics in the first place.

The British Red Cross is to be congratulated for drawing attention to female land-mine victims in Cambodia. However, much needs to be done if more women are to have access to prosthetic treatment.

Rachel Gough,
Siem Reap, Cambodia

IT WAS a shock to find out (June 23) that Sweden has a new prime minister, Goran Persson. Still, the old prime minister, Göran Persson, seems to be carrying on as if nothing happened. Could this possibly be the same person suffering from the English-speaker's phobia for funny letters and accents?

The Scandinavian letters å, ä, ö, æ and ø are reckoned as being letters in their own right (in Scandinavia, at least), and are not merely irrelevancies or a and o with funny accents.

Judging by the June 23 issue you have no problem with Möller, Tügüt, Juppé, Provençal and Châtelet, so there shouldn't be any problem with surströmming and rømmegrøt (apart from the fact that combining these two delicacies would probably result in serious projectile vomiting).

Pete Norman,
Stockholm, Sweden

IS Natasha Walter capable of appreciating straightforward writing (Review of Heat Wave, June 23)? Hers is the authentic voice of late 20th century pseudo-highbrow criticism laced with Booker envy.

E Snyder,
St Louis, Missouri, USA

The Guardian Weekly

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AT LEAST 237 people have been killed in worsening summer floods across south China that have stranded 1 million people and affected more than 20 million others, the government said last week.

Damage exceeds $2 billion and 3.2 million acres of crops have been destroyed, the civil affairs ministry said. Soldiers have evacuated 560,000 people from hundreds of villages. Reports said thousands of businesses had been forced to shut down.

The highest death toll was in the south-western province of Guizhou, one of China's poorest areas, where 136 people were reported killed, many by landslides. One hit the train station in the provincial capital of Guiyang, where soldiers (right) reinforce a dam.

Devastating flooding strikes every summer in south China, where centuries of intensive farming have stripped away vegetation and damaged soils needed to catch rain. — *AP*



Ailing Yeltsin backed for second term

David Hearst and James Meek in Moscow

BORIS YELTSIN was decisively vindicated last week in his uncompromising struggle against a communist comeback through the ballot box. But the effort of beating Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist leader, in the final round of presidential elections may have damaged the president's health too severely for him to savour the victory.

Results gave Mr Yeltsin a solid 14 per cent lead over Mr Zyuganov on a strong turnout of nearly 68 million. Mr Yeltsin won nearly 54 per cent of the popular vote.

The election was judged fair and free by observers from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and by the European Parliament, though they expressed concern at the strong media bias in Mr Yeltsin's favour.

Mr Yeltsin, with an energy belying his ill health, got quickly down to work, reappointing Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister and asking him to form a new government.

The outcome of the run-off election came as a relief to the Yeltsin camp after desperate attempts to disguise the fact that the sick and awkwardly moving president had cast his vote from a private sanatorium. The 65-year-old president was filmed by his own cameras casting his vote in Barvikha, the élite sanatorium in which he spent a month recovering after two mild heart attacks last year.

The killer instinct in Mr Yeltsin will want to press home his advantage and fight on until he wrests control of parliament from the Communist opposition, but political reality and his uncertain health dictate otherwise. He needs to create as broad a government as he can.

Indeed, he made a plea for national reconciliation and hinted he would find a role in government for the defeated opposition. "Let us not divide the country into the victorious and the vanquished," the president declared in a televised address to the nation.

Now is the time for paying back political debts, and General Alexander Lebed is first in the queue. Without the former general's support Mr Yeltsin could not have made it. Mr Lebed wants real power and he wants it now. So far he has been given two important posts, but both are advisory rather than executive ones — presidential security adviser and secretary of the security council. But he will allow the sick president no rest.

The growling general wants to be made vice-president, a post that does not exist under the constitution. And he has threatened to quit if he does not get his way on the choice of defence minister.

He made this threat by refusing to consider anyone for the post other than his candidate, General Igor Rodionov, currently head of the Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces. Mr Lebed also expects real control over the financial levers, particularly those used by the dismissed deputy premier, Oleg Soskovyets, who channelled funds to his military industrial lobby.

If Mr Yeltsin allows himself to be dragged down Mr Lebed's road, the government and ultimately the state will grow steadily more authoritarian.

Mr Lebed, who described himself with a smile as "half a democrat", is an admirer of Chile's General Pinochet. The model he is pushing for is a Latin American one — a state that allows its business élite to modernise it, but which keeps ruthless control.

Mr Yeltsin needs to put a heavy counterweight to Mr Lebed. That he might yet find in Mr Chernomyrdin. His centrist prime minister, representing the oil and gas lobby, is already an enemy of Mr Lebed. He is on record as saying: "Lebed has enough powers."

If he stays in power, Mr Chernomyrdin could be a useful sacrifice for the economic difficulties in September, when a hungry people will be demanding their August salaries and the state will not be able to pay.

The Communist opposition will also be happy to see Mr Chernomyrdin remain where he is. Whereas Mr Lebed bears no responsibility for the catastrophic fall in industrial output over the past five years of market reform, Mr Chernomyrdin, who has been around since 1992, surely does. If Mr Yeltsin faces industrial unrest in the autumn, who better to jettison than his prime minister?

Mr Yeltsin also wants to bring in Grigory Yavlinsky, the last remaining democrat on the political scene. However, Mr Yavlinsky has always been Mr Yeltsin's bitterest critic. If he accepted the offer of vice-premier in charge of economic reform, it would be on the condition of bringing in his own economic men. Mr Yavlinsky has also made much capital out of running Russia as a law-based state, tearing into Mr Yeltsin for starting the war in Chechenia, and has demanded that he surrender his power to appoint the prime minister.

This is probably too high a price for Mr Yeltsin to pay, and with his eye on 2000 — when the next presidential election is due — Mr Yavlinsky is more likely to be attracted by staying for another four years in opposition. His time has not yet come, and he has much to lose, as everyone does, by working under an ailing president.

● Russia breached one of the most important conditions of its truce with rebels in Chechenia at the weekend when it failed to dismantle the fortified checkpoints that control movement around the breakaway republic. The resurgent crisis in Chechenia is one in a long list of unresolved problems facing Mr Yeltsin as he comes down to earth after the election victory.

Comment, page 10

Hutu rebels admit to tea factory slaughter

Chris McGreal in Bujumbura

HUTU rebels have admitted responsibility for massacring more than 80 people on Burundi's largest tea plantation last week, claiming all those killed were soldiers. Among the dead were a small child shot through the eye at close range, a young boy cut about the head with a machete, and several women. Their bodies were laid out in front of the still-burning tea factory where they worked and lived.

The Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD), led by Burundi's former interior minister, Leonard Nyangoma, said they attacked the Teza plantation because it was providing considerable revenue for the government. Tea is Burundi's second largest export crop after coffee.

The FDD blamed the civilian deaths on the army, but survivors such as Tharcisse Gashirahamwe, a watchman at the plantation's primary school, tell a different story.

"It started at 6am. The government soldiers couldn't defend this place and most of them ran away," he said. "I was hiding, watching. When they saw the army's empty mattresses they started whistling and dancing. After a while they started killing people. The most dangerous among them were the women, who were ordering the men to kill everyone before they left.

"I saw a child killed and a soldier. The child was trying to escape and they shot him." The attack, he said, went on for seven hours.

Most of the victims at the factory were Tutsis, but witnesses said there were some Hutu among them.

The Teza massacre has reinforced the urgency of plans by Burundi's neighbours to send in a military force to quell the violence, which is claiming 100 lives a day. Most of the victims are unarmed civilians murdered in a cycle of slaughter perpetuated by Hutu rebels and the largely Tutsi army.

Burundi is expected to top the agenda of the annual summit of the Organisation of African Unity in Cameroon this week, despite the government's efforts to backtrack on an agreement to allow foreign troops to attempt to break the cycle of ethnic massacres.

Last month, Burundi's Tutsi prime minister, Antoine Nduwayo, and the largely powerless Hutu president, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, bowed to pressure from other East African leaders and "invited" what was euphemistically described as security assistance.

The Week

A TAMIL rebel suicide-bomber with explosives strapped to her body threw herself in front of a Sri Lankan government motorcade in Jaffna, killing at least 21 people.

A FIERY populist who rejoices in the nickname "El Loco" will be Ecuador's next president. Abdala Bucaram, of the centre-left Roldosista Party, won the second-round election with 54 per cent of the vote.

Washington Post, page 15

HAVANA has demanded that a Cuban who hijacked a plane at gunpoint and took it to the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay, on the south-east tip of the island, be repatriated.

THE Indonesian government will not let the opposition political faction headed by Megawati Sukarnoputri contest next year's parliamentary elections, Antara news agency said.

A CHINESE official in Hong Kong told newspapers to write less about pro-democracy protesters and more about official Chinese statements, saying China's critics were "incorrect" and deserved no more attention.

NEW light could be thrown on the destruction of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie in 1988 during an inquiry by a French team which is being allowed into Libya to investigate a similar bomb attack on a French passenger plane the following year.

MARTIN Bryant was charged in Hobart, Australia, with 34 more murders stemming from the April 28-29 shooting spree in Port Arthur that killed 35 and wounded 18.

THE man jailed for life for the assassination of the former Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, appealed to the supreme court to overturn his murder conviction. Yigal Amir's lawyers argued that evidence suggested another gunman was involved in the November attack.

A GROUP of suspected Muslim separatist militants shot dead at least 11 migrant workers in India's Jammu and Kashmir state, police said. Police said Kashmiri militants often target people they suspect of being government informers.

THE Albanian president, Sali Berisha, under fire from the West after a general election widely criticised as unfair, said he would invite opposition parties to join the new government.

HUNGARY is to establish a foundation to administer confiscated Jewish property for the benefit of Holocaust survivors, an agreement Jewish groups hailed as a model restitution scheme.

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Sharon casts cloud over Netanyahu

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

BINYAMIN Netanyahu was due to arrive in Washington on Tuesday on his first visit as Israel's prime minister, amid American anxiety over the last-minute inclusion of the hardliner Ariel Sharon in his already shaky cabinet.

The appointment of the former general, forced on Mr Netanyahu by a threat of resignation from his foreign minister, David Levy, cast a cloud over the visit. US officials had made it clear that the fate of Gen Sharon, reviled as the architect of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, would be read as an indicator of Mr Netanyahu's commitment to the peace process.

The new prime minister clearly wanted to delay the appointment until after his visit. But aides argued that while the Clinton administration would have struggled to accept Gen Sharon in either of the key posts of defence or finance, it could probably tolerate him as minister of the new portfolio of "national infrastructure". Gen Sharon's newly created national infrastructure ministry is expected to be the third largest after defence and education, with an estimated $2 billion budget.

Wariness over Mr Netanyahu was heightened by his first post-election meeting in Jerusalem last month with the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, where the two were said to have had a frosty encounter.

Washington is unhappy about the Likud leader's rejection of the land-for-peace principle which has underpinned the peace process, and by his failure to meet the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. So far all contact has been through an aide.

But Mr Netanyahu has signalled that he is keen to placate the Americans. He reportedly plans to tell Mr Clinton he will go ahead with Israel's promised withdrawal from the West Bank town of Hebron, although under a different plan from that of his Labour predecessor, Shimon Peres. He intends to lift barriers on Palestinians working in Israel and back the flow of international aid to Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

Mr Netanyahu is also expected to offer the prospect of substantial progress on Lebanon. He will reportedly say that if Lebanon and Syria stop Hizbullah rocket attacks on northern Israel, he will pull Israeli forces out of southern Lebanon — the key Hizbullah demand.

Israeli sources said that ultimately the United States have nothing to fear, because Mr Netanyahu is too anxious to maintain the strength of the US-Israeli relationship to risk a fight.

Educated in the US and a fluent performer of soundbite politics, Mr Netanyahu has none of the animosity towards America that characterised the last Likud prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir. He does not want to repeat Mr Shamir's stand-off with former president George Bush, which paved the way for the Likud defeat of 1992. Instead, he will go to great lengths to show he is an Israeli leader with whom the US can do business.

For Mr Clinton, the visit is a chance to mend the damage of his endorsement of Mr Peres, and to restore faith in his greatest foreign policy achievement — the Middle East peace process. Now resigned to the likelihood that there will be no Israeli-Syrian deal before the November election, Mr Clinton will be looking for a guarantee that at least the current gains can be maintained.

Both men therefore have a big stake in this week's visit going well and looking good on camera.

● Mr Netanyahu is facing a host of embarrassments at home, after opposition MPs demanded to know why he appears to have used four different names while living in the US. Mr Netanyahu's spokesman, Shai Bazak, insisted that "the prime minister has nothing to hide".

The suggestion is that Mr Netanyahu used the aliases to prolong his stay in the US. But his Labour party opponents find it suspicious that the file unearthed by a newspaper, Kol Ha'Ir, was marked "secret", leading to suggestions that the Israeli leader may have worked for the CIA.



Police fire a water cannon in New Delhi during a demonstration at the weekend against petrol price rises. The month-old centre-left government of the prime minister, H D Deve Gowda, increased petroleum prices by up to 30 per cent, prompting nationwide strikes and criticism from leftwing cabinet members. Mr Deve Gowda later agreed to halve the increase in the price of widely used diesel fuel

Republicans target Perry over Saudi blast

Martin Walker in Washington

CITING new evidence on intelligence and security failures that led to the death of 19 US troops in last month's terrorist bomb attack in Saudi Arabia, the Republicans are to open hearings in Congress this week aimed at unseating the defence secretary, William Perry.

The Republicans have gathered evidence — and military and civilian witnesses — to condemn security procedures at the Khobar Towers complex, outside the Dhahran air base.

They will assert that despite the bomb attack which killed five Americans and two Indians in Riyadh last November, the CIA and Defence Intelligence Agency had virtually no knowledge of Saudi militants, and assumed they could deploy nothing more lethal than the 100kg bomb used in Riyadh. The truck bomb used at Dhahran contained some three tons of explosive.

The Republicans will also produce the security reports filed on the dangers to the Dhahran base by US air force experts, who produced a list of 39 recommended precautions, including relocating US troops into the desert or away from the vulnerable perimeter at Khobar Towers, and covering all the windows with plastic film to prevent flying glass. This would have cost $4.5 million and was delayed because of cost.

But on the basis of the flawed intelligence, the air force team did not stress the need for a wider security perimeter outside Khobar Towers. And although local commanders tried to obtain permission from the Saudi authorities to widen the existing 25m perimeter, they did not push the issue nor appeal to higher political and diplomatic authority.

Military and civilian intelligence agencies have complained that they were given little help by their Saudi allies. The four Saudi nationals convicted of the Riyadh bomb were tried and beheaded without being made available to US interrogators.

The tendency to blame the Saudis is apparent in newspaper cartoons, including one example in the Orlando Sentinel which showed an Arab sheikh telling an American soldier: "No, you don't understand. The deal is that you get to defend us. We don't have to defend you."

Clinton administration officials fear two serious implications of the hearings before the Senate armed services and intelligence committees. They expect some pointed criticism of the alliance with Saudi Arabia. They also expect a concerted attempt — already threatened by Senator Arlen Specter, chairman of the intelligence committee, and by the House Speaker, Newt Gingrich — to single out Mr Perry as the most likely scapegoat.

Mr Perry's vulnerability is increased by the Republicans' fear that President Clinton is slipping out of the clutches of the Whitewater scandal.

The Pentagon's relations with the White House have been transformed since Mr Perry became defence secretary and General John Shalikashvili took over as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. Its readiness to deploy US power in Haiti and Bosnia has buttressed President Clinton's foreign policy.

Washington Post, page 15

Turkish MPs in vote punch-up

Chris Nuttall in Ankara

MODERN Turkey's first government led by an Islamist prime minister was approved by parliament on Monday in a high-tension vote of confidence marred by gun-carrying and fighting among MPs.

Uproar erupted as members of secular parties attacked colleagues who had voted against the alliance with the Islamist Welfare party of Necmettin Erbakan.

The former foreign minister, Emre Gonensay, was punched by a colleague in his True Path party, and another deputy was hit to the ground.

Voting resumed after a seven-minute delay and Mr Erbakan's government went on to win by 278 votes to 265.

A group of MPs from the far-right Grand Unity party, whose seven seats swung the vote in favour of the new government, then attacked a member of the opposition Motherland party, who drew out a gun to defend himself. Security guards and other MPs piled in to disarm the gunman as mayhem ensued.

Ten other True Path deputies voted against the government; the party's only Jewish member abstained, and four MPs stayed away in protest.

The True Path leader, Tansu Ciller, who is foreign minister and deputy prime minister, said the vote was about choosing a continuing stalemate or an end to a nine-month political crisis.

"We have chosen a social consensus," she said and added that the country could not be left any more to her centre-right rival, Mesut Yilmaz, the previous prime minister in a three-month minority coalition notable only for the bitter in-fighting between True Path and his Motherland party.

It was the finest hour of Mr Erbakan, aged 69. He has built Welfare up from a minority party to win control of great cities like Istanbul and Ankara and finish ahead of the traditionally strong centre-right parties in last December's general election.

He played on the personal animosity between Mrs Ciller and Mr Yilmaz to destroy their brief coalition. He forced three corruption inquiries into Mrs Ciller's affairs, which left her with little choice but to join Welfare in government if she was to suppress investigations that could ruin her politically.

But his first steps in office will not have pleased radicals. Despite election promises to realign Turkey with the Muslim world, the government last week made a priority of maintaining ties with the West.

Mr Erbakan realises that moves to enhance the role of religion in politics and society could lead to the breaking up of the coalition and antagonise the secular establishment, notably big business and the armed forces.

Ramos peace plan opposed

SCREAMING Christian demonstrators tried to strike the Philippines president, Fidel Ramos, with placards last week as opposition mounted to his proposed peace pact with rebel Muslims, *writes Ruben Alabastro in General Santos.*

The placards were thrust almost in General Ramos's face as his motorcade drove past an estimated 7,000 demonstrators. "We do not want to give Mindanao away", and "We don't like Misuari", read the posters.

Mr Misuari leads the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), vanguard of a 24-year revolt for Muslim self-rule in the region.

Gen Ramos's two-hour visit to General Santos, a largely Christian city of 400,000, brought to a raucous end a two-day trip to southern Mindanao, where he was met by rowdy protests by Christians.

At every stop, Gen Ramos defended his proposed peace plan with the MNLF. "I know none of you would want to return to the days of conflict, violence and bloody struggle. Let us put all of that behind us now," he told government employees at the Sarangani provincial hall near General Santos. He blamed opposition to the plan by the region's Christian majority on their lack of understanding of what it entailed.

The protests were spurred by a recent agreement between the government and MNLF panels to set up a transitional administrative body in the islands, the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development.

It will supervise and co-ordinate development efforts and help keep the peace in 14 provinces and nine cities in Mindanao, the ancestral home of the largely Christian country's 5 million Muslims. — *Reuter*

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African war children make plea for help

Vincent t'Sas in Yaounde

CHILDREN from war-ravaged African countries ended a conference in Cameroon with an impassioned plea for protection from warlords who had press-ganged some of them into their guerrilla armies.

"All child soldiers should be disarmed immediately and sent to schools or vocational training centres," said Angela Massaley, aged 15, reading from the conclusions of the mock summit's committee on child soldiers.

The 120 children were brought together by the United Nations children's agency Unicef for a two-day meeting ahead of the annual summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which began on Monday.

A 14-year-old girl who said she had been raped during Mozambique's civil war cried throughout the meeting.

The children were selected from 11 countries torn by civil war or instability. Some had experienced violence first hand, and some even confessed to killing. Their representatives were to address a plenary session of the 53-nation OAU during its three-day summit.

"I think that we are going to achieve something," said Rebekah Negash, an 18-year-old Ethiopian who chaired the meeting. "Once the presidents hear directly from some of us what our sufferings have been as child soldiers and refugees, they will have to do something."

Rosemary Iboso, aged 16, who was kidnapped by rebels in Uganda at the age of 12 and saw her father killed, said: "I hope that the OAU will listen to us, stop the wars and rescue our lives from the rebels."

Two heads of state — President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali and the Eritrean leader, Issayas Afeworki — attended the closing session of the children's meeting.

"I am a father myself," Mr Konare told the children. "When I see the killings that take place even in places such as hospitals and schools, I say to myself: 'This should not be the future of Africa. We can do a lot better.' "

Mr Konare, who won elections in Mali after soldiers ousted unpopular leaders, said greater democracy was the only way to avoid war in Africa. "When looking for power, we should not use violence," he said.

Clelia Kinigi, aged 14, of Burundi, asked a senior official representing the UN secretary general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, why the UN withdrew peacekeeping forces from Rwanda at the start of the 1994 genocide there.

"I did not understand his answer. But I believe he said that the United Nations themselves were very sorry that the troops had not stayed," Ms Kinigi said later. She said she hoped ethnic massacres in her own country would be stopped in time before they reached the scale of the killings in Rwanda, where an estimated 1 million people died. — *Reuter*

Hekmatyar brings little hope to Kabul

Gerald Bourke in Kabul

MINUTES before Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was sworn in for the second time as Afghanistan's prime minister last month, a senior member of his Hizbe Islami party spoke of its attempts to persuade the Taliban Islamic militia to silence the artillery which had pounded Kabul all day, killing and maiming more than 200 civilians.

"We sent them a message of peace, asking them to agree to a ceasefire," Qaribur Saeed declared. "We told them the people of Kabul are the people of Afghanistan and the only way to end the war is to negotiate a settlement."

It was another example of the hypocrisy that comes so easily to the leaders of the warring factions, and instils such loathing in the ordinary people they claim to represent.

Four years ago, Islamic factions seized Kabul from an embattled communist regime. They soon turned their guns on each other and Hizbe was driven out by the combined armies of Burhanuddin Rabbani, the spiritual head of Jamaat Islami, and Rashid Dostam, a powerful ethnic Uzbek from the north.

For the next three years, Hizbe, ultimately backed by General Dostam's once pro-communist mercenaries, indiscriminately bombarded the capital to try to dislodge Jamaat. They only succeeded in killing tens of thousands of Kabul's residents and reducing swaths of the city to rubble. During much of this time, Mr Hekmatyar was officially prime minister, but never dared to enter Kabul.

Early last year he fled from his main base, south of Kabul, in fear of a confrontation with the advancing Taliban, and was effectively reduced to the status of a local commander. Then last month, he struck a deal with President Rabbani. It not only paved the way for his restoration as prime minister, but rescued him from the brink of political and military extinction.

"This man is responsible for the deaths of thousands of people and the destruction of our city," said a surgeon at one of the city's few functioning hospitals, echoing a sentiment widely felt across the capital. "It's absurd. All the so-called leaders use the slogans of Islam, but their soldiers systematically kill, rape and plunder."

From the safety of a bullet-proof Jeep, deep in a convoy of pick-ups packed with heavily armed henchmen, the prime minister has witnessed for the first time the devastation wrought by his forces. But there has been no apology.

Excuses, though, are plentiful, and Mr Saeed had one ready. "We never fired first, we only retaliated when we came under attack," he claimed with a brazenness typical of the country's power-hungry leaders.

There have been no protests since Mr Hekmatyar's arrival. "Demonstrations would be useless," said the surgeon. "We don't even have the right to life, so we are reduced to worrying about how we can nourish and house our families."

Relief workers say half of Kabul's 1.2 million people do not have adequate food or shelter. The prices of staples continue to soar and beggars are everywhere — many of them women who have lost their husbands to the rockets which pound the city.

The government is to blame for the misery and for the plunging value of the afghani, the national currency. To oil its military machine, Jamaat flies in planeloads of freshly-printed afghani banknotes from Russia.

The proceeds have been used to buy vast quantities of weapons from overseas — and the dubious loyalty of Mr Hekmatyar. Many Kabulis are convinced that, bolstered by Hizbe's fighters and firepower, Jamaat will soon launch a big offensive to drive the Taliban from the southern outskirts of the city.

"I have no doubt the war will resume with a vengeance," said Herat Khan, an elderly man queuing outside the city's only orthopaedic centre with a grandson who lost both legs in a rocket explosion. There were murmurs of agreement from others waiting to be fitted with artificial limbs.

In public at least, both the president and prime minister have recently extolled the virtues of peace. They have launched separate charm offensives, ostensibly aimed at wooing rival armies.

The Taliban militia, who have vowed to rid the country of all other fighting factions and establish a pure Islamic state, refuse to be swayed. "We have had enough of their lies," said one of their commanders during an artillery exchange. "The only solution is to fight."

Le Monde, page 13

Australia cuts its intake of immigrants

Agencies in Canberra

AUSTRALIA said last week it would cut its general immigration intake by 10.8 per cent in the next year and introduce English language tests for would-be immigrants, reflecting concerns about high unemployment.

The government said the intake from July 1, 1996 to the end of June 1997 would be cut to 74,000.

More cuts would come in the family reunion scheme, it added. The number of people allowed to immigrate under that provision will be reduced to 44,700 from 58,200. Australia will also cut the intake of refugees by 1,000 to 14,000.

The prime minister, John Howard, was quick to say that Australia would maintain a non-racial immigration policy. The government would select immigrants with better English language skills, better work skills, and a greater ability to contribute quickly to national wealth, he said.

"We are not going to look at the colour of a person's skin or the person's country of origin in choosing. We are going to look at the skills and the abilities that people have," Mr Howard said.

He said some immigrant groups with poor English had unemployment rates of more than 30 per cent, three times the national rate. He did not specify which groups, but government figures show unemployment highest among Vietnamese and Middle Eastern immigrants.

Ethnic lobby groups criticised the cut in the family reunion programme, which enables people overseas to join their relatives in Australia, as an attack on Asian immigration, which many Australians oppose.

But the immigration minister, Philip Ruddock, insisted: "It will be a better and more appropriate mix."

Smokin' Bob should learn to lighten up



The US this week

Martin Walker

IT TAKES extraordinary political powers to throw away the opportunity that has been presented to Robert Dole, the Republican candidate for the presidency. But on last week's wretched performance, the former senator from Kansas appears to have affronted middle America, the press, the medical profession, the health vote, his wife and the nation's sweetheart, all at one fell swoop. He also managed to get Washington talking about something other than the FBI files affair and the accident-prone Clintons.

This takes some doing, and Dole achieved it with one brief television interview. He had been invited, with his attractive and intelligent wife Elizabeth, to appear on the NBC Today morning show to help sell the new edition of their joint book, Unlimited Partners. (Not recommended: it is simultaneously vapid and glutinous.) This should not have been difficult. They were to be interviewed by Katie Couric, a presenter who veers between the deferential and polite. She has a pert grin and is sometimes known as "America's sweetheart".

At one point, she asked Dole about the Democratic attacks on him as "Smokin' Bob", an apologist for the cigarette industry. The industry has indeed donated some $400,000 to him, and some $2.8 million to the Republicans. This is a delicate matter, now that the tobacco barons have replaced the arms dealers as the Merchants of Death. Even smokers in the US feel guilty about their habit, and a majority of them tell pollsters they support President Clinton's attempts to stop children and teenagers from starting to smoke.

The Democrats have seized this opportunity, and their campaign has got under Dole's skin, not least with the character called Mr Butts. Wherever Dole goes, he is haunted by a Democratic activist dressed up in a 7ft high foam rubber costume that looks like a filter cigarette, who hands out fake dollar bills that show Dole puffing on a fag that looks like a rolled-up banknote. These days more and more volunteers are joining Mr Butts to shout "Give it up, Smokin' Bob".

Some Dole staffers are pleading with the campaign to lighten up. They advocate retaliating with a "joint-man", disguised as a marijuana cigarette, to dog Clinton. Or they suggest deluging each Butt-man with applications for their FBI files, or a job in the security team at the Clinton White House. But senior Republicans are incandescent with rage, since the man who began their torment was Craig Livingstone, who had recently resigned as director of personnel security at the White House. At the time, he was testifying before Congress on the embarrassments of the FBI files that landed in his office safe.

Livingstone made his name in the 1992 campaign as the keeper of "Chicken George". This was another activist dressed as a large chicken, who would attend every one of President Bush's campaign events while he declined to debate with Clinton. The message was that Bush was frightened of Clinton, and therefore "chicken". Even after the debates got under way, Livingstone kept up the torment. So when Mr Butts started to dog Dole, the Republicans panicked.

There can be no other explanation for Dole's vicious riposte to the hapless Katie Couric. He accused her of being part of "the liberal media" and of getting her facts from his enemies — "the New York Times was never known to be friendly to Bob Dole, that I can recall". Then he really got nasty, asking whether "people like you" were "violating the FEC [Federal Electoral Commission] regulations by always, you know, sticking up for the Democrats". (Dole speaks in such elliptical, staccato and verbless clauses that it is impossible to quote him verbatim and convey much sense at all. Hence this truncated form of conveying what he grunted, sneered and sort of said. Or, as Dole puts it at the end of most paragraphs, "whatever".)

With most journalists, it can be a useful tactic for a politician to go on the attack, to question their objectivity and to denounce their bias. But not with Katie Couric: American viewers know her too well. And it is very unwise of a politician to suggest that a tough question should expose the journalist to investigation by a federal agency like the FEC. It brings up unpleasant memories of the Nixon White House's threats against the TV licence applications and other business ventures of the Washington Post.

Having dug his hole, Dole kept on digging, like the stubborn old cuss he looked. Even on tobacco, Dole has an answer. He knows cigarettes can kill — he lost a brother to emphysema. But in a free society, if informed adults want to smoke, there are limits to what governments can or should do to stop them. But Dole would not stop. He



owed the tobacco barons, and Dole is the kind of honest politician who gives value for campaign money.

If there is one American who inspires universal respect these days, it is President Reagan's old surgeon-general, Dr C Everett Koop, with his no-nonsense medical advice and Old Testament white beard. Dr Koop had been supporting Dole, but Dole's grunts that he was not convinced that tobacco was addictive, or that it did much more harm than milk, was too much for the old doctor. The Republican candidate had to be misinformed, Koop said, in a kindly, chiding way. Dole's reaction was to say that Koop had been watching too much of the liberal media and "probably got carried away". Brainwashed, Ms Couric asked. "Probably. A little bit," Dole replied, as his wife tugged at his sleeve, muttering that it was time to talk about their book.

For Dole, this was disastrous. He has spent much of this year telling Americans that he is a softer and more cuddly Bob Dole. Yet he has a dark and waspish side, which he always used to show under pressure. As President Ford's vice-presidential running mate in 1976, Dole faced Walter Mondale in a television debate and suddenly sneered at the second world war, Korea and Vietnam as "Democratic wars".

In 1988, having been beaten in the New Hampshire primary by George Bush and the local machine of Governor John Sununu, Dole was asked if he had a message for the victor. A polite word of congratulation would have been in order, perhaps with a jibe that he looked forward to beating Bush when he did not have the state governor to run his campaign for him. Instead, Dole looked as mean and sullen as any politician has done since Nixon, and snarled to the cameras, "Yeah — stop lying about my record."

That is the Bob Dole Americans remember from his campaigns. In Washington, political insiders prefer to recall his courteous and gentlemanly ways in the US Senate, and his evident belief in the occasional need for agreements that rise above partisan politics.

He is a sincere man who pays his debts. He supports tiny Armenia, and never forgets the Turkish massacres of 1915 because it was an Armenian doctor who sewed his war-torn body back together after 1945. He has a tenderness for the underdog and never stopped supporting Bosnia — if any US politician deserves a statue in a rebuilt Sarajevo, it is Bob Dole.

In domestic matters, Dole has a reasonably centrist record, at least in recent years since he stopped being Nixon's hatchet man. He supported affirmative action for women, complaining of "the glass ceiling" that stopped women executives rising to the top of corporations. He has always been sceptical about supply-side economic theory and Reaganomics, and was roundly dismissive of the flat-tax theories of Steve Forbes, the mega-rich publisher who briefly challenged him in the primaries.

But such is Dole's present desperation that he is considering putting forward a flat tax scheme of his own, although it will have to be described in terms that will spare him having his own sneers quoted back at him: "Flat tax — sounds like flat earth to me." Even if he doesn't go that far, his campaign chiefs are saying that a big economic and tax statement will be unveiled before America tunes out politics to watch the Olympic Games. But who knows? There appears to be turmoil at Dole campaign HQ, where Donald Rumsfeld, the former chief of staff at the Ford White House, seems to be assuming some of the functions of the titular campaign chief, Scott Reed.

This is like shuffling deck chairs on the Titanic. Given Clinton's embarrassments (he gave videotaped evidence in another Arkansas criminal trial on Sunday), Dole should be at least level-pegging with his rival. The public do not much trust their president, and even less his wife, and politicians of Dole's experience should know how to take advantage of such an opportunity. But Clinton is the purest politician that America has ever seen. His timing is immaculate.

On July 4, it seemed as if the whole of America went to the movies to see the latest Hollywood blockbuster, Independence Day. Already breaking all box-office records after cinema chains stayed open throughout the night to screen it, the film provokes thunderous cheers when invading aliens from outer space destroy both the White House and the home of Congress, the US Capitol.

Clinton had already seen it in the White House cinema, but he recommended the movie to his fellow Fourth of July celebrants in rural Maryland, a safe 50 miles from the White House. "Somebody said I was coming to Youngstown because this was the day the White House got blown away by space aliens," Clinton said. "I hope it's there when I get back. Anyway, I recommend the movie."

NATURALLY, that made every July 4 and July 5 television news broadcast. Clinton comes across as a regular guy who enjoys the same films as other Americans and can take a joke. Meanwhile there was Dole grumbling that nobody had yet convinced him that tobacco was addictive, and maybe Dr Koop had been brainwashed. If this were a boxing match, they'd have stopped the fight by now. As a campaigner, Dole simply is not in the same league as Clinton.

And then on July 5, just to twist the knife, Clinton made a rare appearance in the White House press office to celebrate the latest figures from the Labor department. Unemployment had dropped yet again, to 5.3 per cent. But the real news was that in the 42 months since he took office the US economy has created 10 million jobs. Set that against his promise of 8 million new jobs back on the 1992 campaign trail. Moreover, median family incomes are beginning to climb again, and the minimum wage is about to go up.

The voters find Clinton an ambivalent figure, likeable and yet untrustworthy, well-meaning but tricky, hard-working and yet often insubstantial. The latest Gallup poll illustrates this contradiction. Asked if the words "honest and trustworthy" applied to their president, 54 per cent said No. Asked whether he had "the honesty and integrity to serve as president", 62 per cent said Yes. Better a Slick Willie who delivers than an honourable bungler like Jimmy Carter, or that hapless butt of Butt-man, poor old Bob Dole. His admirers in the White House are planning to throw Dole such a wonderful birthday party on July 22 that every voter in America will know that the dear old thing is 73 years old. How kind. How very clever.

US parent-killers given life sentences

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

A LOS ANGELES judge showed the limits of the "abuse excuse" last week when he sentenced Lyle and Erik Menendez to life in prison without parole for killing their parents in 1989. The brothers claimed to have suffered years of sexual, physical and emotional abuse at the hands of their mother, Kitty, and father, José.

Judge Stanley Weisberg said the two men deserved no leniency and should serve two consecutive life sentences, one for each parent. "The defendants separately considered killing their parents," he said. "This was a decision made over several days." A key piece of evidence was the brothers' admission that they had paused to reload their shotguns in order to kill their mother; a sign, prosecutors said, that they acted in cold blood.

Prosecutors sought the death penalty, saying the brothers could commit further crime if they lived. But a defence lawyer said it was ridiculous to view them as dangerous. The defendants, who have the right of appeal, showed no reaction.

José Menendez made a fortune in the entertainment business, married his college sweetheart, had two sons and, to all appearances, lived a charmed life.

The parents were found murdered on August 10, 1989. The sons said they came home and found them dead. It was six months before the two were arrested; by then they had begun to spend their parents' money.

Watching the ruling was Anna Eriksson, Lyle Menendez's prison pen pal turned fiancée. They had wanted to marry before he began his prison term, but the ceremony has been put on hold.

Stone of Scone to go home

JOHN Major delighted patriotic Scots but astonished the political establishment at Westminster last week by unexpectedly announcing that the ancient Stone of Scone is to be returned to Scotland 700 years after it was seized by the marauding English, *write Michael White and Erlend Clouston.*

The Prime Minister's announcement, which ministers insisted was not a political gesture towards Scottish nationalism, means that the "Stone of Destiny" — the historic symbol of Scotland's monarchs until Edward I brought it to Westminster Abbey in 1296 — will be rehoused later this year, probably in Edinburgh Castle or St Giles' Cathedral.

Downing Street was quick to quell speculation that Mr Major's gesture would renew pressure on Britain to hand back other cultural icons seized during its imperial heyday, notably the Elgin Marbles. The stone is the property of the Queen and is simply being removed from one part of her kingdom to another, the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, confirmed.

Ministers also tried to quash the instant revival of another legend: that the stone, which was stolen by nationalists — stolen back, they would say — in 1950, was not returned to its place below the Coronation Chair in 1952, the year before the Queen became the latest monarch to be crowned above it.

A fake was substituted and the real stone is still in Scotland, former Labour frontbencher, John McAllion, and others said.

Mr Forsyth, who initiated the decision, repeatedly stressed: "I do not regard this as a political gesture." Instead he stressed the stone's religious symbolism. But many MPs see the decision as chiefly symbolic of the Tories' 15 per cent share in Scottish opinion polls.

The Prime Minister later renewed his assault on Labour's plan for Scottish devolution, warning it would produce an "insulting" Edinburgh parliament and lead to economic decline.

Making the first, and possibly last, prime ministerial address to the Scottish Grand Committee, Mr Major castigated Labour for jeopardising "a birthright without price" by "grubbing around for votes". He was depicted in turn as a contributor to the possible break-up of the United Kingdom through his failure to listen to Scottish demands for change. He also refused repeated Labour requests to say how the Tories would respond to a double Yes vote in Labour's projected devolution referendum.

The Prime Minister's historic presence assured a huge turn-out of Scottish MPs at Dumfries's Easterbrook Hall. Arriving MPs ran a gauntlet of demonstrators, including parents objecting to the (Labour) closure of a primary school and a goat representing pensioners angry at the withdrawal of free bus passes.

Mr Major announced the creation of 1,000 jobs at a Taiwanese electronics factory at Mossend in Lanarkshire and a project by St Andrews University to republish the papers of the original Scottish parliament. Later, he laid a wreath at the Robert Burns mausoleum.

The stone in place under the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. It was returned in 1952 after being stolen on Christmas Day 1950

Weather forecast: hot, dry and French

Paul Brown

SOUTHERN England will have the climate of the Champagne region of France in 25 years' time and Yorkshire will replace Kent as the Garden of England, the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, said last week.

Launching his department's review of the effects of climate change on the UK, he said the climate was already noticeably changing and would continue to do so until the "familiar landscape of the Cotswolds and Suffolk will be growing sunflowers and maize" by 2025.

After another 25 years, the climate will have shifted again, with southern England resembling the Bordeaux region and the Champagne climate moving to Yorkshire.

The report predicts that the south and east of England will become much drier as well as warmer, with summer water shortages becoming normal, while the north-west will become far wetter.

Mr Gummer said that while the predictions brought some good news — for example, a boost to tourism — on balance it was bad, particularly for counties in southern England. In 30 years, the climate of Europe will have moved 150 miles north. For example, Paris will have the climate of the south of France, and Spain will be mostly desert.

It means southern England will enjoy the same climate as the Loire valley and, therefore, the whole pattern of agriculture in Europe would have to change. There would be enormous need to adapt quickly, and it remained to be seen whether Europe would still be able to feed itself.

Rain and windstorms will become more frequent in Britain and do more damage than at present. A rise in the sea level of up to 35cm will threaten low-lying areas.

The UK has already authorised an increase in the height of sea walls but storm surges caused by the combination of high tide and wind will threaten East Anglia, the Humber region, Teesside and the Firth of Forth.

Some plant and animal species will die out, while others will have to migrate northwards. Insects such as the malaria-carrying mosquito will be able to thrive in southern Britain.

Mr Gummer was due in Geneva this week for talks on the UN Convention on Climate Change.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Howard finds himself in a pickle over jail security

THE Government cannot find the £2 billion it needs to improve security standards at the overcrowded prisons to which it consigns an ever-increasing number of inmates. The security improvements were recommended by the Learmont inquiry into an embarrassing breakout from Parkhurst prison, on the Isle on Wight, last year but the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, was hoping to sit tight and say nothing about his inability to implement them.

Parliament had been told that Mr Howard would explain "in the spring" what he intended to do about the recommendations. But internal Whitehall documents show that the Home Secretary was advised to stall. There was a "presentational problem", said one document. "Ministers would not wish to indicate the implementation of a significant security report was contingent on achieving adequate funding."

The document suggested that Mr Howard might tell Parliament about the actions he was going to take (on recommendations that required no extra funding) and say he was "still studying" the others. If questions were asked, Mr Howard could possibly plead "the complexity of the issues" as a reason for not dealing with the Learmont proposals in full.

Far from raising extra money, Mr Howard has been asked to cut prison running costs by 13 per cent over the next three years, and capital spending by 60 per cent. Record prison numbers have led to inmates sleeping on mattresses on the floor at one prison.

The Home Secretary does, however, have money to set up a new national police squad to focus on drug traffickers and major criminals, though Mr Howard denies that it will be the equivalent of America's FBI. It would, he said, be an amalgamation of the six existing regional crime squads to provide a national response to what was a national threat. And, if successful, to put more people in prison.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, tabled his first debate in the House of Lords to launch a crusade to reinvigorate the morality of the nation. He stressed the centrality of the Ten Commandments in what, he claimed, was still a predominantly Christian country in danger of squandering its Judaic-Christian moral inheritance. Without basic values of honesty and faithfulness, society was in danger of degenerating into chaotic gangsterism.

Besides worrying about the nation, Dr Carey has other problems in his own back yard. In the diocese of Lincoln, he ordered two squabbling clerics to resign "for the good of the cathedral and the Church". But he has no power to sack either the dean, the Very Rev Brandon Jackson, or the subdean, Canon Rex Davis. They have been feuding ever since Dean Jackson was appointed in 1988 to "sort out" Lincoln after a disastrous fund-raising venture by Canon Davis, who took the cathedral's copy of Magna Carta to Australia and lost £56,000 on the enterprise. Things took a turn for the worse last year when the dean was exposed to a consistory court hearing on a charge — found not proven — of improper sexual conduct with a female verger.

Also looming is a battle over the Church's "incoherent" position that tolerates practising homosexuality among the laity but not among the clergy. More than half the members of the Synod (the Church's governing body) said in a survey that they knew of clergy who were practising homosexuals. And more than two-thirds of members thought homosexuals should not be ordained.

Comment, page 10

THE most radical shake-up of the legal aid scheme since its inception in 1950 is planned by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, who wants everyone — even those on legal aid — to make some contribution, possibly £10 or £20, towards the cost of their cases. Individuals on legal aid who lose their cases could have a second mortgage taken out on their home to meet either their own or their opponents' costs.

In order to impose cash limits on the legal aid scheme, which is now costing an annual [illegible] billion, Lord Mackay's proposed legislation will bring in a "merit" test so that only the most deserving cases will be funded at taxpayers' expense. But there will be more emphasis on mediation as a way of settling disputes, so legal aid money, previously restricted to law firms, will become available to relatively inexpensive advice agencies as well.

THE Prince of Wales delivered his proposals for a divorce settlement to the Princess's legal team at the weekend, breaking 10 weeks of deadlock and opening the way to a quick end to the marriage. If it is accepted, a decree nisi could be granted before the couple's 15th wedding anniversary at the end of the month.

The offer is thought to envisage a "clean-break" settlement worth between £15 million and £20 million, partly funded by the Queen or by means of a loan. The most contentious issue is whether Princess Diana should be allowed to retain the title "Her Royal Highness", which would enhance her image. There will almost certainly be a "gagging clause" to prevent the appearance of yet more kiss-and-tell books or interviews.



Fears over Dalai Lama's visit to Britain

Madeleine Bunting

MEMBERS of a British-based Buddhist sect are behind an aggressive international smear campaign to undermine the Dalai Lama — one of the world's most revered religious figures and political leader of Tibet — ahead of his visit to the UK this month.

The Dalai Lama is accused of being a "ruthless dictator" and an "oppressor of religious freedom" in direct contradiction to his message of religious tolerance, according to a spokesman for an organisation called the Shugden Supporters Community (SSC), based in Yorkshire, which has been distributing press releases worldwide.

Members of the SSC belong to one of the fastest-growing and richest sects in the UK, called the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT), whose headquarters are in Cumbria.

The sect has expanded dramatically since it was founded in 1991, and is now the biggest Buddhist organisation in the UK with more than 200 affiliated centres at home and more than 50 abroad. Membership is put at around 3,000.

The founder of the NKT is a Tibetan monk, Geshe Kelsang, who has lived in Britain since the late seventies. NKT members believe they must obey, worship and pray to Kelsang because he is the Third Buddha.

Former members maintain that the Department of Social Security has unknowingly played a critical part in funding the NKT's rapid expansion. NKT associates have acquired at least five large properties in the past year, and a significant proportion of the 300-odd residents of their centres claim housing benefit of up to £60 a week. The benefit is paid as rent and used to service the large mortgages on properties.

Organisers are concerned for the safety of the Dalai Lama during his week-long visit to the UK, starting on July 15. There have been threats from the SSC of demonstrations in London and Manchester, where he is scheduled to speak before large audiences.

The SSC maintains that the Dalai Lama has banned a centuries-old Buddhist practice and claims that Tibetans in India have been dismissed from their jobs, monks expelled from their monasteries and statues destroyed. Amnesty International says the SSC has yet to substantiate its allegations.

The concern among British supporters of Tibet is that the SSC campaign will play directly into Chinese hands. As a Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Dalai Lama has had enormous success in raising the profile of the cause of a free Tibet — it has been occupied by the Chinese since 1950. The Chinese see the undermining of his reputation as a world religious leader as an effective way to weaken support for Tibet.

In Brief

A VOLUNTARY national identity card scheme, using the photocard driving licences to be introduced next year, received strong support from a Commons home affairs select committee. A decision is likely to be made next month.

THE Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, confirmed that he will stand down as MP for Tunbridge Wells at the election. His impregnable 17,132 majority will trigger a rush of hopeful successors.

THE amount of fraud detected in local government has nearly doubled in two years to more than £60 million a year. Illegal claims for housing benefit and student grants account for most of the money being siphoned off by organised gangs, the Audit Commission reports.

PARENTS have paid out an estimated £200 million during the current academic year to support 18-year-olds at university as grant cuts continue. Allowances from parents are soaring although the average level of student debt jumped by nearly a third to £1,982.

BRITISH Airways planes could be grounded indefinitely from July 16 after the pilots' union said that it would strike unless the company shifted its position in a dispute over flight crew pay. The union claims the walkout will cost BA £40 million a day.

OXFORD university has appointed 162 professors to almost double the number of professorships. The move will not add to costs, since the new posts will not carry an additional salary, but will provide recognition to scholars of international reputation who were not getting the esteem they deserved because of financial constraints.

Comment, page 10

A WOMAN is to be Britain's new high commissioner in South Africa. Maeve Fort, aged 45, at present ambassador in Beirut, will succeed Sir Anthony Reeve, who is retiring. There are now eight women heads of British missions abroad.

STARK similarities to the murder of toddler James Bulger in February 1993 emerged as the body of nine-year-old Jade Matthews was found by a railway line in Bootle. Police are questioning her natural father as well as seeking three boys seen near the little-used Liverpool railway line where her body was found.

LES POWLES, a 70-year-old round-the-world yachtsman who was given up for dead, is back in Britain after being out of contact for four months and narrowly avoiding death by storm and starvation. He said he was planning another long voyage.

Seven slashed in attack at infant school

John Carvel and Alex Bellos

A MASSIVE hunt was under way on Monday for a machete-wielding attacker who forced his way into a Wolverhampton infant school and lashed out at staff, parents and children as young as three in the playground. Four adults and three children were injured.

Police named a man they were looking for as 32-year-old Horrett Irving Campbell, also known as Izzie, who lives in Villiers House, a block of flats near the scene of the attack at St Luke's Church of England School in Blakenhall, Wolverhampton.

Up to 50 police officers, some in riot gear, raided the block of flats in their search for Mr Campbell, whom police described as a dangerous man, not to be approached. Police also raided his father's home elsewhere in Wolverhampton. However, they stressed he was only a suspect.

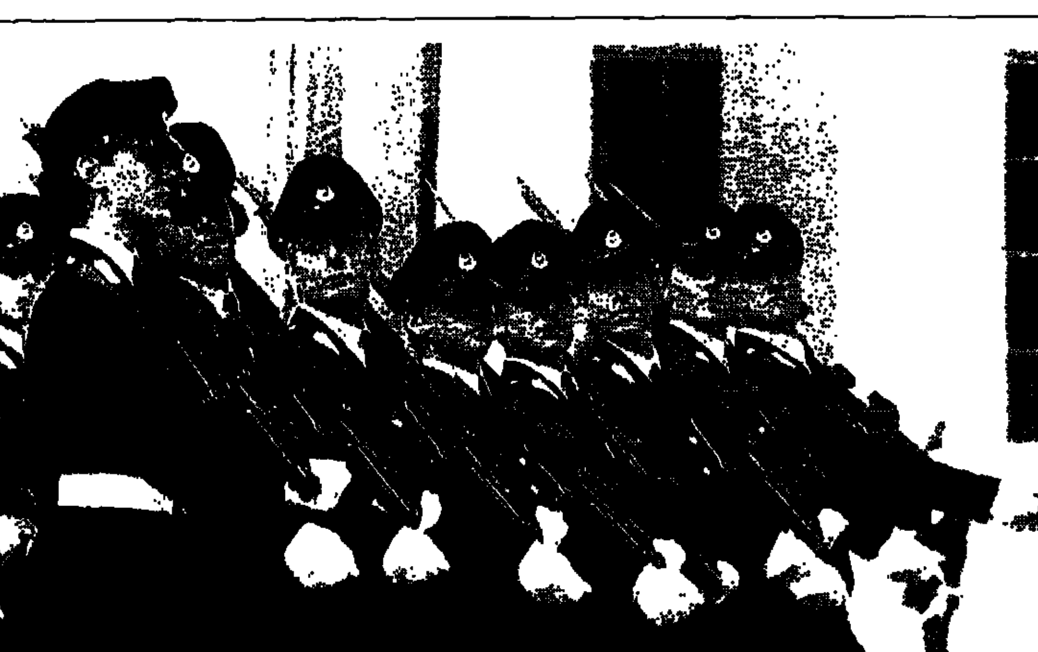
All three children underwent surgery on what were described as "disfiguring head injuries". The children were named as Ahmed Malik, aged 3, Francesca Quintyne, 4, and Rhena Chopra, 4. Rhena's mother, Surinder Kaur, 29, was also injured, and underwent an operation. The other adults hurt were Azar Rafiq, 29, Wendy Willington, 29, and nursery nurse Lisa Potts, 19.

The attack came towards the end of the school day when a man in his mid-30s appeared to become involved in an argument with a woman outside the school.

Many of the children were at school for the first time, enjoying a teddy bears' picnic party designed to make them feel at home when they began school next term. The attacker jumped over the fence and struck out at a teacher before moving on to the party. He slashed at the children as they tried to run inside.

The assault brought renewed demands for resources from the Government to implement recommendations for school security after the murder of a London head teacher in December and the massacre at Dunblane in March in which a teacher and 16 pupils were gunned down.

The inquiry which followed concluded that schools could not be turned into fortresses, but that reduced numbers of entry points and installation of closed-circuit TV could improve safety in some cases.



Learning the drill . . . women cadets at the Sandhurst military academy PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Army beefs up women's combat role

THE army's top brass have decided in principle that women should be allowed to fight in the front line. However, they are holding back from instituting this final form of equal opportunity because they believe British society as a whole is not yet ready for it, *writes David Fairhall.*

In a report that will shortly go to the Defence Secretary Michael Portillo, the Army Board has recommended that everything but the infantry and the armoured corps should immediately be opened up to women. This means female soldiers could find themselves serving in Bosnia with the sappers or the artillery, not just driving a truck or operating a radio.

Even then, however, commanders will be expected to exercise some discretion — for example, by posting women to the gun lines but not sending them right forward to an exposed artillery observation post. Nor is there any immediate prospect of their being involved in what soldiers call "the final brutal business" of hand-to-hand combat.

Two considerations are driving the army forward in the direction of complete sexual equality — a serious shortage of recruits, and the way in which some servicewomen have recently exploited European equal opportunities law. Many millions of pounds have successfully been claimed in compensation — for instance, by women who were wrongfully dismissed when they became pregnant. Almost any form of discrimination, whether racial or sexual, is now open to legal challenge.

Britain's armed forces generally, in line with their American allies but not the traditionally-minded Germans, have already taken enormous strides towards the goal of non-discrimination in the past few years.

Mandela says 'stop hiring our doctors'

David Brindle

MINISTERS have summoned leaders of Britain's hospital trusts and urged them to stop recruiting doctors from South Africa because of the impact on its health service.

The move came ahead of this week's state visit to London by Nelson Mandela, the South African president.

Whitehall is not commenting on suggestions that Mr Mandela raised the issue with Downing Street in advance of his visit. But a Department of Health spokesman said: "It was passed through to the NHS that there were concerns."

Hospital trusts have been going overseas in search of doctors and nurses because of acute shortages, particularly in anaesthetics and some other specialties.

The South African health department has complained at moves to "poach our scarce resources to provide care for the British people at the heavy expense of our disadvantaged South Africans".

Problems have been exacerbated by the surging demand for doctors in parts of South Africa that were denied proper health care under apartheid.

The Department of Health has confirmed that Gerald Malone, the health minister, last month called in leaders of the two organisations representing NHS trusts to discuss the protests.

"Mr Malone recently met with leaders of the NHS Trust Federation and the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts and they have agreed to draw their members' attention to the potential effect on the South African health care system," a spokesman said.

South Africa has been a popular hunting ground for trusts seeking doctors because medical training there is highly rated.

Philip Hunt, director of the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts, said: "I told Mr Malone that we are sympathetic to the difficulties of the South African health service, and will draw our members' attention to them, but that at the end of the day it is up to individual trusts to make their own decisions."



Blair lays ghost of 'tax and spend'

Michael White

TONY Blair's launch of Labour's five-pledge Road to the Manifesto last week unleashed a propaganda blitz between the major parties which pitted familiar Conservative allegations of extravagance against Labour counter-charges of reckless mendacity by the "Tory lie machine".

In a move calculated to kill off Labour's old "tax and spend" image, bind party supporters to his priorities for government, and win over wavering voters, Mr Blair promised a radical but responsible "contract for a new Britain" if he wins the election due within 10 months.

The Labour leader told a crowded press conference: "In government, this will be what we deliver" — and deliver it without breaching Gordon Brown's "strict rules for spending and borrowing".

Within hours of the Labour leadership's official publication of its 10,000-word pre-manifesto statement — to be voted on by all 376,000 Labour party members by the end of the year — Tory HQ had unveiled a 1,000-site "New Labour, New Danger" poster campaign, and John Major had warned that the new policies would mean higher taxes, despite Labour assurances to the contrary.

The sharpest skirmish involved the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, who picked on one of Mr Blair's five symbolic priorities — to phase out the assisted places scheme and divert funds to cut class sizes to under 30 for 5- to 7-year-olds over three years — to prove that Labour had got its sums wrong.

"This is Houdini economics, the politics of smoke and mirrors," said Mr Clarke, only to be confronted by Labour's new "rebuttal unit" with figures from Mr Brown which accused the Chancellor of missing the crucial phasing of the policy.

The key battleground in the months ahead, however, remains taxation. Mr Brown's £3 billion windfall tax on the privatised utilities — to finance job creation for young and long-term unemployed — is already under fire, while some City analysts do not believe Labour can deliver its declared objectives without raising taxes or borrowing.

In the presence of his shadow cabinet, Mr Blair insisted that past Labour heroes could all have signed up to principles underpinning the statement, even though it reflected changed policies for a changed world. "Yes, there has been a revolution inside the Labour party. We have rejected the worst of our past and rediscovered the best."

Mr Blair must now start selling his policy statement to supporters and voters, some of whom fear that too many concessions have been made to head off Tory attacks.

But after their disastrous anti-Labour spoof called The Road To Ruin, Conservative strategists promised to harry him all the same. Mr Major told MPs: "The new Labour party's policies mean new taxes . . . on Scotland, on people with children aged 16 to 18, taxes for living in London, taxes on jobs with the social chapter, and the minimum wage."

The Conservative chairman, Brian Mawhinney, issued his own five points, claiming that Mr Blair's five would bankrupt Britain. He issued a 14-page analysis of the Labour statement's weaknesses. Labour HQ countered with a 40-page rebuttal.

In response to the prospect of millions of Labour cards bearing the five pledges, the Tories issued similar red cards repeating their own warnings.

Tax trap, page 12

Labour's promises

- Cut class sizes for 5-7-year-olds using cash from abolishing assisted places scheme
- Fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders
- Reduce NHS waiting lists by 100,000 patients using £100m saved from cutting bureaucracy
- Take 250,000 under-25-year-olds off benefit, using cash from tax on privatised utilities
- Tough rules for government spending; ensure low inflation; keep interest rates down



New Labour's verbless link to Keir Hardie

SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

LABOUR press conferences are run these days with the slick efficiency of a supermarket opening. First they play tapes for people whose musical appreciation comes from elevators: Moving On Up, Things Can Only Get Better, upbeat songs which make you yearn to buy more extra-thick yoghurt.

Then the minor celebrities arrive. First those members of the shadow cabinet you haven't quite heard of, plus those Tony Blair hopes you won't hear of again. Then the more famous ones.

At some point someone must have said to them: "OK, darlings, take ten, but don't go away, we may need you later," and they trooped off to the side of the hall where they acted as a claque, cheering Mr Blair and jeering at questions which they didn't care for — a salutary experience for all the hacks.

It was a cunning speech, designed to say simultaneously that New Labour was entirely different from Old Labour, and yet in some mysterious way linked atavistically to Ancient Labour.

"Keir Hardie, Attlee and Harold Wilson would sign up to it," he said of the manifesto. "But 1896 is not 1996," he added.

It certainly isn't. I doubt that Keir Hardie would have recognised this resounding sentiment: "Consistent with the high-quality services we need, you should be able to keep as much of the money you have earned to spend as you like."

For one thing, the people Keir Hardie (no relation to New Labour's "Kir" Hardy, the popular Dordogne bartender) spoke for didn't earn enough to dream of paying income tax.

Mr Blair announced five "pledges" — the first things his government will do. One of these is a new "fast-track punishment" regime for persistent young offenders. (This may conceal a return to capital punishment, which cannot be long delayed. Judges will don the peaked cap and intone: "You will be taken from this place to the Eurostar fast-track outside Waterloo, where you will be be placed until such time as you are decapitated by the 10.23. Tie him down!")

The innumerable members of the party staff even handed out cards listing all five instant pledges, labelled: "Keep this card and see that we keep our promises." (I might have kept mine, if it had contained something useful, such as the number of a mini-cab firm.)

As so often with a Blair speech, as it progressed, it began to shed verbs. Sentences were reduced to a cluster. Nouns and pronouns. Sentences, verbless.

"Fairness at work. Practical proposals. In crime, tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime. Smaller classes. Shorter waiting lists. New Labour. New Life for Britain."

For too long, the party's energy wasted. On verbs. For the British people, now, no more verbs. Tough on verbs, tough on the causes of verbs. New Labour. New nouns, adjectives. Real words for a new Britain.

There is a purpose to this. Verbless sentences sound as if they are firm promises. The mind supplies the missing phrases: "We shall provide . . . we will legislate for . . ."

Yet nothing concrete has been proposed. Like so much of the manifesto, each verbless phrase offers a fine aspiration, worthy in every way, utterly estimable, and entirely vague.

Hard sell on road to Downing Street

WHEN Tony Blair told party activists during the launch of Labour's Road to the Manifesto statement that if they "believe this is not the way forward, now is the time to say so", he sounded like an Anglican vicar asking the traditional question during the marriage service, *writes Michael White*.

Which is roughly where he finds himself as he embarks on a four-month campaign to woo and wed MPs, peers, the 350,000 members of the Labour party, not forgetting those wary trade unions, and bind them in everlasting bliss to his distilled version of New Labour's priorities for government.

What this is partly about is just that, locking in the activists to what Mr Blair hopes to do as prime minister, "getting his betrayal in first", as cynics put it in tribute to the stormy Wilson-Callaghan years when charges of betrayal were left-wing coin of the realm.

So the Road to the Manifesto is, in large measure, a huge education exercise, partly aimed at the watching electorate. But it also embodies a useful exercise in stripping down policy commitments and jettisoning those which might embarrass the leadership in the coming election battle.

Throughout the summer months there will be public meetings, union conferences, interviews and speeches, leading up to the party conference in Blackpool on September 30, which is expected — emphatically — to endorse the statement.

After that, in a repeat performance of the campaign to re-write Clause 4, every Labour party member will be asked to vote yes or no on the document. The result will be known by the end of the year.

But it is not quite like the Clause 4 battle. That may have been a top-down initiative too, but there were at least two sides to the argument: old Clause 4 versus its updated rival. Victory is all but assured in 1996, but this time there must be genuine fears that the turn-out will be low, either because Old Labourites quietly abstain or new supporters feel no need to endorse a foregone conclusion. Such an outcome would allow the Tories to revive claims that Blair leads an unreconstructed party.

And the Tory onslaught, though ham-fisted, signalled a determination to thwart the Labour leadership's efforts to turn its manifesto into the fiscal equivalent of an American Stealth bomber.

But far from having no policies, a repeated jibe, Labour has lots. The statement is highly ambitious. If prime minister Blair fulfilled half of it, a grateful electorate would be impressed.

● Labour's revival under Tony Blair's leadership owes its intellectual respectability to six core propositions about Britain's place in the modern world which are dangerous and wrong, according to a leading Tory intellectual.

Without the work of eight influential gurus on themes such as globalisation, stakeholding and constitutional reform, the Labour leader's speeches would not be given their "quite exaggerated respect," according to David Willetts, a former think tank guru and now junior public services minister at the Cabinet Office.

Mr Blair's utterances are "almost entirely mood music, with some rather grandiose assertions mixed in". What gives them weight are key buzz words. These include "community" — under threat from "globalisation" of the economy and job "insecurity", which generates social insecurity and crime; "short-termism", which is a central fault of Anglo-Saxon finance capitalism; "stakeholder" as a means of reforming business and welfare to make them more "inclusive"; as well as "constitutional reform" as an antidote to Tory "centralisation".

Mr Willetts's eight targets are Frank Field, the Labour MP for Birkenhead; Peter Mandelson, spin-doctor, author and MP for Hartlepool; Professor John Kay, exponent of stakeholding; Will Hutton, editor of the Observer; Andrew Marr, editor of the Independent; John Gray, ex-Thatcherite Oxford don; Professor David Marquand, formerly of the SDP and, surprisingly, Simon Jenkins, Tory ex-editor of the Times. He is included because of his book, Accountable To None, which criticises Tory centralisation of power at the expense of local government.

Writing on the wall

Number of times these words appear in the draft manifesto

new	107
change	36
security/insecurity	20
lead/leadership	18
partner/partnership	14
stake/stakeholder	8
socialism/socialist	1

Better the devil they know

BORIS YELTSIN is back by a margin that overnight appears to have vanquished all sorts of demons, and has even restored a degree of vitality to the victor himself. With no evidence of significant rigging, the voting may be judged reasonably fair. The persistent bias of most of the Russian media, heavily influenced from the Kremlin, is another matter. But the gap between Mr Yeltsin and the Communist candidate, Gennady Zyuganov, was so wide that it is doubtful whether more balanced coverage could have reversed the outcome. In the end, a majority of voters was more worried by the potential "return of communism" than by the actual defects and disasters of life under the current regime. Foreign correspondents in Moscow may have failed to produce many Yeltsin enthusiasts to give a positive gloss, but they did find plenty of voices explaining why they voted against his opponent.

Worries about Mr Yeltsin's state of health counted for more abroad than among the electorate — if only because the Russian press avoided saying too much about it. Mr Zyuganov's own campaign was not a great success, and his second-round performance seemed to convey the expectation of defeat: however much he dissociated himself from the substance of past policies, his style still conveyed an unhappy whiff of the party bureaucrat that he was in the Soviet years. Yet the most compelling explanation for Mr Yeltsin's victory remains the one suggested by our correspondent David Hearst at the start of the election: most Russians prefer to carry on with the gang now in power than invite a new bunch to move in on the turf.

A relieved Bill Clinton, quickly followed by such authoritative commentators as the Nato secretary-general, were quick to declare that the result was a victory for democracy. Does that mean that a different result in favour of Mr Zyuganov, if achieved by exactly the same process, would have been something quite different? It would be prudent to throttle back the applause and wait to see what happens. If Mr Yeltsin regains his health for sufficient time to function effectively, he has two immediate tasks. The first is to cut down to size the very man he has only just elevated — ex-general Alexander Lebed, who has been spattering out his alarming views on the economy, General Pinochet, Mormons, Jews, and his own claim to the (as yet non-existent) post of vice-president. The second is to decide what to do about the substantial minority vote for Mr Zyuganov, whose arguments had already influenced the president's second-round platform. Popular unhappiness over unemployment, prices, corruption and crime will not go away. An effort to build bridges with this substantial body of dissent — if not the outright coalition suggested by Mr Zyuganov — needs to be made.

Filling the moral vacuum

IF ARCHBISHOPS cannot talk about morality, who can? But even for them the territory is strewn with perilous traps as the Archbishop of Canterbury discovered last week when just before he launched a debate on morality in the House of Lords, he was invited during a BBC radio interview to condemn the adultery of the Prince of Wales. Dr George Carey declined, indicating that both members of the royal marriage had his support. It is not easy being an archbishop — you are condemned if you are judgmental, and condemned if you are not. But for an archbishop who has been so eager to condemn moral relativism, the episode provided a piquant lesson on the difficulties of declaring moral absolutes.

Dr Carey is not the only one concerned about a decline in morality. A recent Gallup poll published suggested 75 per cent of those interviewed thought Britain was less moral, with 72 per cent believing there is no longer a broadly agreed set of moral standards. Yet the poll contained its own contradictions because, paradoxically, further questions established a broad consensus on many issues of right and wrong: lying was condemned by 75 per cent, fare dodging on public transport by 83 per cent, and drink and driving by 97 per cent. Relativism raised its head with only 66 per cent saying it was wrong to stay silent if undercharged by a big chain store — compared with 84 per cent if undercharged by a corner shop. Where there was more confusion was on which order the "seven deadly sins" should be placed. Asked to identify the worst, envy was chosen by 28 per cent followed by avarice (20 per cent), lust (12), gluttony (12), wrath (9), pride (7) and sloth (3).

Dr Carey is worried by a modern moral vacuum in which too few people have thought about the purpose of life. He should take note of the familiar advice of Oxford philosophers: the layman who thinks that he wants some authority to tell him the objective truth about good and evil, to provide him with a purpose and a creed, is liable to find, if someone takes him at his word, that he already has very strong valuations of his own, and that they clash with those offered.

Sensibly, Dr Carey was much less apocalyptic in his speech to the Lords than in a newspaper article last week, in which he warned that if Britain's moral decline was not reversed business would descend into "chaotic gangsterism" and society could perish. Once again he raised the issue of moral relativism. No one would quibble that his narrow definition of relativism — do-it-yourself morality with individuals selecting their own moral code — should be opposed. Morality is much more than a matter of taste or opinion. But relativism is much wider than this. It warns about absolutes and emphasises the need to take other elements — circumstances, conditions and culture — into account.

Without such qualifications, intolerance emerges. For every sin of modern-day relativism — and its readiness to explain deviant behaviour — the archbishop should remember the crimes committed by earlier Christians with their absolute faith ruthlessly rooting out infidels. Let him take a boat up the Nile and observe the desecration of Egyptian temples by Christians who knew the truth — the absolute truth.

The problem with debates led by archbishops is that morality — as Dr Carey conceded — should not just be left to people with religious inclinations. The Greeks were searching for truth and goodness long before Christ was born. And as Gallup noted, it is not the Church (10 per cent), or school (13 per cent) where people believe they learn their moral code but their home (83 per cent). It is not quite that simple: politicians, industrialists and the media all play their part. People who are told there is no such thing as society are less likely to help others. Yet in an economy in which people have been encouraged to fight for themselves, avarice is still placed second among the deadly sins. All is not lost.

A proliferation of professors

HISTORY has not turned full circle . . . yet. In the Middle Ages the three academic titles — master, doctor, professor — were synonymous. Oxford has not gone that far back but for 261 of the university's academic staff, Monday dawned a glad confident morning: 162 became professors and 99 readers in one go. Overnight the number of professors jumped from 199 to 361 and the number of readers from 107 to 206. Journalists are well qualified to comment on such developments for as readers may have observed, the number of editors on newspapers has similarly multiplied. Part of the motive appears to be the same: a management strapped for cash but ready to buy some relief by conferring higher status for the same pay. The new professors will receive no more money and their duties remain the same. But Oxford insists that each of the 261 promotions had to pass through a rigorous selection procedure. It seeks to end the anomaly under which celebrated Oxford lecturers have to play second fiddle to less eminent academics holding professorial titles at other institutions. It hopes to ensure its academics get better conference bedrooms — and better research grants too.

The move is one more step towards the American model, where all academic staff seem to be either assistant, associate or full professors. Two years ago, the UK's Association of University Teachers floated a similar idea in the wake of a wave of new professors when the polytechnics were re-labelled universities. Snobbery was the main motive even though the polys were using managerial position rather than scholarship as their main test. A secure profession would not need such status labels. Like "reporter", "lecturer" should be a proud enough title.

Russia obsessed by its sense of destiny

Martin Woollacott

WHETHER we will ever be able to get off the Russian treadmill is hard to know. Those nervously watching Russia from outside, hoping for a clear-cut victory for reform or the country's definitive arrival in that state of grace called Democracy seem bound to be disappointed time and again.

Yeltsin has won by a large margin. Yet his triumph is no sooner recorded than the struggle begins again. This is not only because the Communists remain a formidable opposition, but because, in achieving victory, Yeltsin has drawn into his own camp elements of the authoritarian nationalist forces to which the remodelled Communists now belong. Instantly, the focus switches to the balance between Victor Chernomyrdin and Alexander Lebed, with Yeltsin in a position to play his divide-and-rule games once more. Yesterday, it was vital that Yeltsin should prevail over Zyuganov. Today we are told it is vital that Chernomyrdin should prevail over Lebed. Russia will not give us rest.

Nor is this a new experience. From the moment Gorbachev came to power, Russian politics has offered a series of crises in which it was asserted, in Russia and outside, that a critical decision was about to be taken. Taken, it proved of less importance, or at least of less positive importance, than had been claimed. Bad outcomes might be averted, but good ones were not necessarily secured.

Who remembers now the many battles fought by Gorbachev to push through this or that reform, his skilful handling of volatile assemblies, his winning of yet another set of "powers" allegedly indispensable to the solution of the Soviet Union's problems? Then came the choice between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, between the reformer who, for all his achievments, had failed to defeat the forces of reaction, and the new leader who promised to bury them. But who, as it turned out, did not.

Under Yeltsin, we have had the comedy of tilt and trim in fullest measure. Reformers in, then out, then in again; the power of the security forces enhanced, then their disciplining; war, then peace, in Chechenia; a constant flirtation with nationalist ideas. Three dramatic votes favouring, in turn, Yeltsin, Zhirinovsky's party, the Communists, and now a fourth, again for Yeltsin.

The key to this lurching back and forth lies in the ancient Russian preoccupation with national power and destiny and an almost equally ancient division between a school of rational aspirations and a school of fantastical claims. If Russia did not renew itself, Zyuganov said at Davos earlier this year, a political "black hole" would suck in the states of central Asia and "the entire world would probably collapse". His achievment has been to publicise a synthesis between communism and Tsarist nationalism, in which Lenin stands in the line of Peter the Great and both in the line of Christ.

The West is seen as materialist and hostile, Russia always as its potential victim. Communists will continue fighting, Sovietskya Rossiya, said last week, "to save our country from devastation and enslavement". Not much of this makes much sense, but it is pyschologically potent. It makes Russian history whole again, proposes to heal the split between communists and other kinds of nationalists, and provides a non-Marxist basis for political association between Russia, other eastern Slavs, and the Tatar and Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

What several years of open politics have done is to bring this kind of thing into the mainstream, make it respectable, and package it for Western-style electioneering. But its roots go back almost 30 years to a time when communists, aware that the Marxist ideology was dead, began to search around for an ideological replacement. One road led toward the nationalist-communist synthesis now represented by Zyuganov. The other was the road of modernisation, through reform, of political structures, cutting military expenditure, re-organising industry and agriculture, and re-casting the Soviet Union as a free association. That was Gorbachev's way. Yeltsin, pragmatist and opportunist, intermittently protects that tradition but makes concessions to the non-communist version of the other, like the co-opting of Lebed, when his power is threatened. The result is an unstable alliance between liberals, conservatives, and nationalists.

The camp of reform in Russia was only able to match the nationalist brew at a time when Gorbachev seemed to promise a renewed and invigorated Soviet Union, or when Yeltsin briefly captured Russian popular feeling after the coup. Reform has brought confusion and pain, crime and disorder, as well as benefits. Yeltsin, repudiating it at one moment, welcoming it back at another, rides the storm. Why does Russian politics apparently offer no escape from this dualism?

THE BROAD answer is that the morality play of modern nations is far from over. We are only now beginning to admit how much nationalism was the main engine of political action on both sides of the old Iron Curtain and how wrong were expectations of its demise. The truth is that both nationalism and internationalism were strong, and interlocking. A number of nations, including France, Germany, Russia, Britain, and the United States, lay claim to world roles.

Such claims are, at bottom, mystical, unjustified, odd. Yet they are extraordinarily difficult to set aside. Russia's sense of mission may be, as Solzhenitsyn argues, essential to its national being.

George F Kennan says, in his book At A Century's Ending, that "we are at a hard and low moment in the historical development of the Russian people. They are just in the process of recovering from all the heartrending reverses that this brutal century has brought to them. We should bear this in mind."

In that recovery, the restatement of the visionary as well as the pragmatic traditions of Russia and their presentation as choices for voters is inevitable. Both traditions come with objectionable baggage, even if that in the nationalist train is significantly more objectionable. A decisive victory for either is unlikely. Russia is not going to let us off the hook in the foreseeable future.



Mangroves and machines . . . Shell is getting the blame for lower living standards in the Niger delta PHOTOGRAPH: SHELL PHOTO SERVICE

Oil inflames a delta of discontent

A barrister berates Shell in front of an audience of village elders. It's music to the ears of the military, writes **Patrick Donovan**

GIVE him a wig and black silk gown, and Napolean Agbedetse could have walked back into the south London courtrooms where he used to practise as a barrister. He is on the bank of the Abadino river, deep inside the mosquito-infested mangrove swamps of the Niger delta. Despite the shirt-soaking humidity, Mr Agbedetse is immaculately dressed in a heavy black pinstripe suit.

Standing on the jetty amid a welter of gawping young boys, he cuts a hugely incongruous figure as he courteously greets representatives of the Shell oil company and prepares, yet again, to do verbal battle on behalf of the miserably poor Omadino people. This is only one of the hundreds of remote rural communities in Nigeria who feel they are being cheated out of their birthright by foreign oil companies.

This issue has rarely been out of the headlines since the country's military government late last year outraged international opinion by proceeding with the hanging of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa — a campaigner for the the Ogoni people, who live in the region to the east of the delta.

Shell, which operates a consortium responsible for drilling more than half the country's oil reserves, has been widely criticised for not doing more to oppose the execution. It is perceived by many in the West to have huge influence with the authorities as oil now accounts for as much as 90 per cent of the government's revenue. But within the subsistence-level fishing communities like the Omadinos near the oil town of Warri, anger is steadily growing.

Last month, 60 protesters forced Shell to shut down its drilling rig in nearby Jones Creek — the latest of a string of incidents throughout the Niger basin, where local communities' dissatisfaction has boiled over into direct action against Shell activities.

Six million people live in this 70,000-square kilometre province. These are rural communities, eking out their living from the mud-brown waters of the Niger and its fast-running tributaries snaking out across a massive expanse of rain forest and mangrove swamp.

But their living standards have plummeted: wildlife is scarce, and fish yields are down. How much this is due to the pressures of population growth, lack of land management or oil industry-related pollution depends on which lobby groups you listen to.

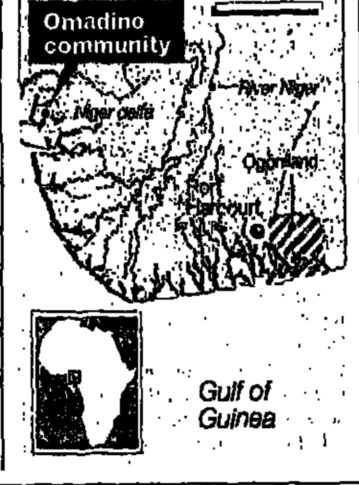
All of which raises the question of to what extent any international company operating in a deprived Third World country should be held responsible for functions which are, or should be, the preserve of the national government. In the case of Nigeria, the debate is clouded still further by the failure of the national government to redistribute hefty oil revenues to the producing areas, and by the myriad local tribal tensions which make it almost impossible to get an accurate assessment of the views of local people.

Yet the debate that took place last week between Mr Agbedetse and Shell's local general manager, Steve Ollerearnshaw, in front of an audience of villagers down the Abadino river does, in simplified form, highlight the underlying conflict.

Although he had cut out a career for himself as a British-based barrister, Mr Agbedetse says that he was driven by his conscience to return to help his native Itsekiri tribe.

Waiting until the contingent from Shell has sat down in the corrugated tin-roofed meeting hall, Mr Agbedetse drops to his knee before Chief Sunday and the other tribal elders, some wearing bowler hats and all seated at differing heights to reflect their varying degrees of seniority.

Waiting until his guests have been served Star beer or cola, he lulls them into a false sense of security, praising Shell for its "sheer hard work" which has "opened up the unknown hidden wealth of our country". And then he turns the knife. Listened to attentively by dozens of stony-faced villagers, Mr Agbedetse accuses Shell of "dictatorship".



"On paper, they dialogue with the community on what developments are needed, but in reality Shell operatives dictate what they want, irrespective of the needs of the people," he says.

Not only do communities like the Omadino get little back from local oil exploration, but also Shell, he asserts, is decimating the region's staple occupation of fishing, through oil spills. He adds: "The plight of those of us in the rural operation areas is one of depression, neglect and poverty."

As they sit in their green overalls, several Shell officials have clearly heard this all before. General manager Mr Ollerearnshaw gets to his feet, pointing out that the company has given the community a block of classrooms and public toilets and will shortly be donating a health centre — the latest items from Shell's $30 million-a-year community assistance programme for the Niger delta region. A further $100 million is allocated for the environment annually.

Shell cannot ignore the fact that it has drained billions of dollars of profits out of Nigeria during the past five decades

He tries to raise the point that Shell is a company, and cannot take on all the functions of central government. But one angry young man, wearing blue and white robes, attempts to hijack the meeting, angrily shouting that the company must do more.

Back in Nigeria's capital city, Lagos, the company's managing director, Brian Anderson, admits that adverse publicity surrounding its involvement in Nigeria has been "very bad" for the company's image, particularly the controversy surrounding the Saro-Wiwa hanging. But Shell insists that the situation in the Niger delta region is far more complex, and Mr Anderson claims that its influence on the hardline national government is far less than the West supposes it to be.

Shell's stance is that it is, after all, a commercial company with a 30 per cent stake in a consortium in which the state-owned Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation has a majority holding. The group, which includes Elf of France and Italy's Agip, pumps more than half of Nigeria's output of 2 million barrels a day, giving the country oil revenues worth $7 billion, of which the government keeps 75 per cent.

At least 3 per cent of this revenue should flow back to the people of the oil-producing areas, according to the terms of a government decree. This is to increase to 13 per cent, although the higher figure has yet to be ratified.

In practice, it appears that government aid has all but broken down, and Shell says that the administration is in arrears with its payments and failing to stump up enough money to meet targets for the joint-venture consortium. That puts even more pressure on the funds Shell and its other partners have for community projects.

The problem is that for many of the rural inhabitants of the Niger delta, Shell has effectively become the government. It may protest that it does not aspire to become a 21st century version of the East India Company; yet the more it seeks to pacify local people by taking over the role of building hospitals and providing schools, the more it replaces Nigeria's military dictatorship as a target for civil dissent.

And yet Shell has been extracting oil here for 50 years. It may play the role of the community-minded Western oil company. But why is it only now making such a fanfare about its perfectly laudable programmes to replant the mangrove swamps and bury its pipelines if not to improve its public image?

Of course attitudes change, but Shell cannot ignore the fact that it has drained billions of dollars of profits out of Nigeria during the past five decades. Its payback to the community has hardly been consistent over that period. And as with all oil explorers, it has inevitably contributed to the pollution of the environment, although there is no obvious sign of any significant spillage within its operating areas in the delta.

But Shell is now having to pay in full. It has played such a pivotal role in Nigeria's economy that it must bear some responsibility when the going gets rough. But the company's predicament may be useful, too, for Nigeria's leader, General Sani Abacha: the controversy diverts attention from the country's fundamental problem — the corruption and inefficiency in its own military government.

Britain will say 'no' to call for sanctions

Nick Cohen

BRITAIN will resist further sanctions against the Nigerian military junta, and put the profits of British Airways and London's City before international demands to increase pressure on the regime.

Diplomats said last week they would block moves by Canada, New Zealand and Jamaica for tougher measures against Nigeria. The three countries are certain to call for a severing of air links when the Commonwealth action group, which is co-ordinating the international response to the junta's suppression of free elections, meets in September. They are also likely to raise the question of a freeze of Nigeria's foreign assets.

In public, Foreign Office spokesmen say ministers "will consider any proposal" from international partners. But in private senior civil servants were adamant that no further sanctions would be allowed. British Airways would be the main loser if air links were cut, one said, and the British government was "not about to tell BA to hand over lucrative business to Air France or some other competitor".

The Treasury has ruled out freezing the junta's assets, for fear that it would damage the City's appeal as a safe home for foreign capital. Nigerian democrats in exile in Britain said they were not surprised by the British attitude. "We've learnt not to expect too much from the Government," said Makin Soyinka. "The Foreign Office has made it very clear it intends to do as little as possible."

Even the few formal sanctions Britain has taken since the execution of the Ogoni environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa last year are being breached with government acquiescence.

Leading members of the regime are meant to be banned from Britain. But while refugees were being denied asylum, ministers allowed Alhaji Gidado Idris, secretary to the military government and one of its most senior civil servants, to visit London.

The all-party parliamentary human rights group called for a far harder line against the junta last week and gave a warning that death squads were murdering the regime's political opponents. It cited the murder in October of Pa Alfred Renawe, a leading supporter of the opposition National Democratic Coalition, and arson attacks on newspapers critical of the regime and homes of opponents.

On June 4, the outspoken wife of Chief Moshood Abiola, jailed after he won the 1993 presidential election, was shot dead. Kudirat Olayinka Abiola was murdered in broad daylight only a few yards from a police roadblock. No one has been charged with the killing.

The most prominent Nigerian political leader in exile, Chief Anthony Enahoro, who launched a national campaign for democracy on February 25, fled the country after he heard that six armed men were looking for him.

He appealed to Britain, America and Canada to give him asylum. "The British said it would be inappropriate for me to come to London," he said. "I was told not to press the matter." He has now found refuge in Washington. — *The Observer*





Weinstock bids farewell with record profits

Lord Weinstock: steps down after 33 years at GEC PHOTO DAVID SILLITOE

Roger Cowe

LORD WEINSTOCK last week delivered record profits and a booming order book plus a surprisingly high dividend increase as his farewell after 33 years in charge of the electrical and electronics group GEC. He will become chairman emeritus after handing over as managing director in September to the former Rover and Lucas chief executive, George Simpson.

GEC chairman Lord Prior said: "His experience in industry is unrivalled and his 33-year record of achievement as managing director speaks for itself."

Profits broke the £1 billion barrier for the first time, almost £100 million higher than last year, before deducting a £48 million provision for contract disputes. The increase came entirely from GEC's three main businesses, and especially GEC-Marconi aerospace and defence electronics operations.

The telecoms joint venture with Siemens of Germany produced £10 million extra profit, while profits at power joint venture GEC-Alsthom rose £20 million to £177 million. Smaller businesses continued to disappoint as the Hotpoint and Creda division saw profits fall to £11 million.

In 33 years at the top of GEC, Arnold Weinstock has carved out a place in British industrial history as one of the country's most successful top managers. But he remains an enigma — a shadowy figure who shuns the high profile adopted by many of his peers.

The company was on the rocks in the late 1950s after it failed to manage the succession to the group's founder, Lord Hirst, and the end of the post-war electrical boom.

The board saw Weinstock as a potential saviour because of his success in running the radio and television business of his father-in-law, Sir Michael Sobell. While GEC and other industry leaders struggled to make money in a growing consumer market, Sobell's Radio & Allied Industries, under Weinstock's leadership, went from strength to strength.

In 1961 GEC bought Radio & Allied and, less than two years later, on January 1, 1963, Weinstock took over as managing director, the post he has held ever since.

One of Weinstock's great attractions to GEC's non-executives was that he was "one of the awkward squad", not prepared to stand on ceremony. He still is, single-minded in the pursuit of profitability.

By 1970 Weinstock had not only turned round GEC but had also controversially taken over the mighty AEI and come in as a "white knight" to save English Electric from the unwelcome attentions of Plessey. Both deals left GEC as the undisputed industry leader, with interests ranging from aircraft and trains, through power station equipment, to defence electronics and consumer products.

Weinstock carried on efforts to rationalise the telecommunications supplier base through a takeover of Plessey, achieved eventually in 1989 through a joint venture with the GEC's German equivalent, Siemens.

Dynamism was also evident in the creation of a joint venture in power engineering with Alsthom of France, plus a merger of the white goods business in the UK with General Electric in the US.

Tight cash control and strict profitability targets remain Weinstock's hallmark and by those standards he has been an astonishing success.

Tax trap awaits whoever wins election

Thanks to Tory car boot sales, Labour is right to plan for fiscal severity, writes **Larry Elliott**

WHEN it comes to fiscal policy, there is nothing remotely new about New Labour. Gordon Brown is Stafford Cripps half a century on, threatening to be an avatar of austerity even before he moves into the Treasury. In fact, he promises to out-Cripps Cripps, because the Attlee government funded increased health service spending without compensatory cuts elsewhere.

For this, Mr Brown deserves praise, not criticism. There are many aspects of Labour's economic strategy that are overly cautious and questionable, but the necessity for fiscal stringency is not one of them.

The problem is simple. The Conservatives promised Britain a dynamic, entrepreneurial society in which we would all be like Richard Branson: instead they have created a car-boot-sale society in which the role model is Del Boy Trotter. And in a car-boot-sale society only plonkers pay tax.

Britain is now a seriously undertaxed country. It has been estimated that the sell-off of nationalised industries is costing some 2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) a year in lost revenues, the North Sea oil companies have escaped with only the lightest of tax regimes, and the growth of self-employment has eroded the tax base by encouraging a discount-for-cash zeitgeist.

In normal circumstances, the solution to this problem would be equally simple. The Government would tighten fiscal policy through higher taxation or lower spending. But, of course, these are not normal times: this is an election year when the needs of the economy run into the exigencies of political survival.

These are the facts. In the 1994 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer predicted that the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) for 1995-96 would be £21.5 billion. It turned out to be £32.2 billion. The problem was not spending, where controls remained tight, but revenues, which were about £10 billion lower than forecast.

About half of the undershoot reflected the fact that nominal GDP came in almost £13 billion lower than expected. With a tax/GDP ratio of 40 per cent, this knocked £5 billion off receipts.

But that was not the end of the story. Value added tax, corporation tax and income tax were lower than they should have been, even allowing for the undershoot in nominal GDP. The tax increases of 1993/94 pushed up the tax/GDP ratio, but not by as much as the Government had hoped.

Economists at Salomon Brothers have come up with six factors which may have eroded tax revenues. First, the 1994 crash in the bond markets hit the profits of the financial sector, where tax payments rose by just 6 per cent in 1995 following an 80 per cent leap in 1994. Had they matched the 40 per cent rise in corporation tax from industrial companies, corporation tax would have been £1.5 billion higher.

Second, the proliferation of tax-free savings schemes may be costing about £1 billion in forgone income tax. Third, 35 per cent of the work force is self-employed, against 30 per cent in the early 1980s. Self-employed people tend to pay less tax than full-time employees, who are taxed at source.

Fourth, involuntary stock-building caused by the slowdown in the economy is hitting VAT, because VAT is reclaimable on stocks. Fifth, the big increase in the VAT threshold for companies from £25,400 in 1990/91 to £47,000 has encouraged the splitting of companies into smaller units. Last, higher VAT rates have stimulated the growth of the black economy.

It is easy to see why the Government is having so much trouble achieving its aim of balancing the budget over the medium term. Indeed, this now looks like an unrealisable aspiration, unless the medium term means the next 50 years. During the last full cycle — the 11 years between 1981 and 1992 — the PSBR including privatisation receipts averaged a modest 1 per cent of GDP. In the five years since, Britain is averaging 5.3 per cent.

The logic is obvious. Fiscal policy needs to be tightened, and will be tightened once the election is over. This is no bad thing, given Britain's inadequate supply capacity and the likelihood that any expansion in consumer demand will trigger a sharp increase in import penetration and a concomitant deterioration in the balance of payments. The austerity of the past few years, although unpopular, has been good for the economy: the UK needs more of it.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is well aware of these home truths. He knows he cannot afford to do what Nigel Lawson did in 1987 and offer a triple whammy of tax cuts, higher public spending and a lower PSBR. He is also insistent that his priority is to restore the Conservative party's reputation for economic competence, which was destroyed on Black Wednesday, and that ladling out tax cuts is hardly the way to do it.

BUT THAT is not to say there won't be some tax cuts in this autumn's Budget, even if the money has to be recycled from somewhere else. Every member of the Conservative party expects personal tax cuts in the Budget, and personal tax cuts there almost certainly will be. The interesting points are how Mr Clarke will deliver them and how Labour should respond.

This week's summer economic forecasts will provide the first clue. Slower-than-expected growth, last year's PSBR overshoot and the revenue shortfall mean that the PSBR forecast will be jacked up from the £22.5 billion in the Budget. The City expects £27-28 billion, but the Chancellor may be tempted to err on the side of caution.

This would have three advantages. It would send out a warning to all those profligate spending ministers about the poor state of the PSBR, it would help keep monetary policy loose by reassuring the City that there will be no tax giveaway, and it will increase the chances of a pleasant surprise come Budget day.

However, these chances should not be exaggerated. On the revenue side, things have started to look a little rosier in recent months, helped by the pick-up in consumer spending. If this were to continue, the Chancellor might be able to stand up on Budget day and claim, straight-faced, that the hole in the public finances was closing as mysteriously as it opened up. But, frankly, it would stretch credulity.

Public spending looks less promising — par for the course in a pre-election year. Net departmental outlays are forecast to rise by 1.5 per cent, but in the first two months of the year they were up by 5.4 per cent on the same months of 1994-95. The possibility of further slippage this year is high, particularly given that £1 billion of the £2.5 billion reserve is already earmarked for compensating farmers with herds affected by "mad cow disease".

The Chancellor's lamentations about the PSBR are not just hype. He may be able to cut taxes modestly, but only if revenues are buoyant and spending ministers show restraint. Even then, there would almost certainly have to be some jiggery-pokery to depress the spending totals for the arithmetic to stack up.

Mr Clarke is coming on like another Chancellor of yesteryear: Roy Jenkins in 1970. But even if he resists the pressure from Conservative Central Office, the need to tighten fiscal policy will remain.

The real issue is not whether this will happen but how. Labour's ideal policy mix should be a loose monetary and a tight fiscal stance, but that does not mean the tax-and-spend choices have to be the same as they are now.

Mr Brown could and should cut the fiscal cake in a completely different way from Mr Clarke, taxing the rich more heavily to benefit the poor. If he does not make the right political choices in office, he will deserve censure. But these are political choices: they need to be made after the election, not now.

In Brief

THE European Commission has insisted on its right to vet the proposed alliance between British Airways and American Airlines. The two carriers have faced a volley of criticism from competitors that they are trying to carve out a monopoly on transatlantic routes.

GERMAN executives from BMW are to fill the top two posts at Rover, despite earlier indications that a British chief executive would be recruited. Walter Hasselkus is to become chief executive and work with Wolfgang Reitzle, who was appointed chairman a year ago. Meanwhile Rover has cut production at its Oxford plant at the cost of 300 jobs.

THE French government is under pressure to agree to a third restructuring plan for Crédit Lyonnais, the state-owned bank which has lost more than Fr20 billion ($3.9 billion) in four years.

THE $4.9 billion survival plan for the Lloyd's of London insurance market received a boost from a poll showing the support of more than 80 per cent of British investors.

THE Post Office, which is involved in a pay dispute with its sorting office and delivery workers, reported profits of $663 million for the past year, down by $79 million on the previous 12 months. Sir Michael Heron, the PO chairman, said "unprecedented" cash demands by the Government, amounting to $1.5 million for every working day, were to blame for this week's 1p rise in postage rates.

AMERICA'S third largest computer firm, Digital Equipment, announced plans to axe 7,000 jobs worldwide. This will bring its global workforce down to about 54,000 from a peak of 120,000 in 1991.

DIAMOND sales soared more than 10 per cent in Britain during the first three months of this year, suggesting the feel-good factor has finally returned.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates July 8	Sterling rates July 1
Australia	1.9554-1.9583	1.9746-1.9766
Austria	16.70-16.71	16.67-16.68
Belgium	48.87-48.90	48.76-48.80
Canada	2.1287-2.1301	2.1191-2.1208
Denmark	9.14-9.15	9.12-9.13
France	8.03-8.04	8.01-8.02
Germany	2.3737-2.3754	2.3690-2.3712
Hong Kong	12.02-12.03	12.03-12.04
Ireland	0.9740-0.9752	0.9721-0.9736
Italy	2,386-2,389	2,386-2,390
Japan	172.16-172.33	170.39-170.54
Netherlands	2.6636-2.6660	2.6569-2.6597
New Zealand	2.2545-2.2576	2.2697-2.2723
Norway	10.13-10.15	10.10-10.12
Portugal	243.99-244.22	243.63-243.90
Spain	199.45-199.67	199.34-199.49
Sweden	10.39-10.41	10.32-10.34
Switzerland	1.9624-1.9646	1.9419-1.9443
USA	1.5540-1.5545	1.5554-1.5561
ECU	1.2531-1.2542	1.2496-1.2509

FTSE100 Share Index up 16.9 at 3741.5. FTSE 250 Index down 30.9 at 4330.5. Gold up $0.50 at $382.00.

Le Monde

Will Chirac come clean on the Paris housing scandal?

EDITORIAL

THREE men conspired to put France, in theory governed by the rule of law, in a highly uncomfortable position when it was playing host to the G7 meeting in Lyon last month. The three men were a director of public prosecutions who habitually buries cases implicating members of Paris's City Council; a Paris police chief who instructed his officers to refuse help to the investigating magistrate under whose authority they had been placed; and a justice minister and parliamentary deputy for the capital's 13th *arrondissement* who stated that "it is not for [him] to have any opinion" on this infringement of the penal code.

During his campaign for the presidency last year, Jacques Chirac was forced to tackle the problem of the state's impartiality. The issue was highlighted by the former prime minister, Raymond Barre, during the previous presidential campaign — seven years earlier — and successfully exploited at that time by François Mitterrand in his battle against Chirac, then mayor of Paris and president of the neo-Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR).

During last year's campaign, Chirac said he was determined to ensure that what he himself had described as one of "the great principles of the republic" would be respected. "An impartial state and an independent judiciary are two elements whose absence can result in all kinds of abuse," he said last year. "As far as I am concerned, I fully intend to guarantee them if the need arises."

That need has arisen. First, there is the case of Olivier Foll. The Paris police chief said that he alone took the decision to tell officers assigned to inquiries being carried out by examining magistrate Eric Halphen not to accompany him when he searched the home of Paris's mayor, Jean Tiberi, last week.

Foll's behaviour was judged "totally illegal" by Patrick Devedjian, RPR deputy for the Hauts-de-Seine *département*; and termed "virtually unprecedented" by Simone Veil, former minister, former magistrate and MEP for Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF), the centre-right party in the ruling coalition.

The state's impartiality again seemed to be in doubt when the public prosecutor decided to halt investigations into the legality of the way Tiberi, when president of the decidedly opaque Opac (City of Paris Housing Authority), allocated a flat to his son Dominique, who owned another property which earned him rent. Dominique is chief adviser to the minister of parliamentary relations.

The issue needs to be cleared up immediately because it involves Paris, where Chirac was mayor for 18 years. That tenure prompted him to remark during his presidential campaign: "What we have done for Paris we shall do for France."

The judiciary would like to investigate certain aspects of what Chirac and his followers "have done for Paris". The obstacles placed in its way suggest that opaque practices used in Paris may have rubbed off dangerously on the state.

(July 2)

'What have you got this morning?' 'Nothing special. Just two or three cases to bury. I'll be home early this evening'

Doubts rise as UN cuts Haiti force

Jean-Michel Caroit in Santo Domingo

THE United Nations is due to continue pulling out of Haiti despite the inadequacies of the country's newly fledged police force and persistent insecurity. After lengthy negotiations, the Security Council has extended the UN contingent's mandate in Haiti by five months but reduced the number of troops from 1,200 to 600.

The 300 international police instructors will remain, as will the 700 Canadian troops who constitute a "voluntary contribution" by that country. To calm opposition criticism, Ottawa has persuaded Washington to contribute to their cost.

China and Russia initially opposed the proposal by the UN secretary general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, that the UN mission in Haiti should be extended, but eventually came round to his view. The restoration of diplomatic relations between Russia and Haiti, combined with discreet trade talks between Beijing and Port-au-Prince (China was unhappy with an increasing Taiwanese presence in Haiti) swept away the remaining obstacles.

Eric Fait, the UN spokesman in Port-au-Prince, says the mission, to be called the UN Support Mission in Haiti, will gradually be turned into a mission aimed at helping to strengthen Haiti's institutions and develop its economy. The mission's mandate will end on November 30, a date not unconnected with the US presidential elections. President Clinton wants to see his troops out of the island before the US electorate goes to the polls.

Meanwhile the breakdown of law and order remains one of the main concerns of Haitians. The new police force, which replaced the army disbanded by the former president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, seems powerless to control mounting crime.

Inexperienced and poorly equipped police officers are paying a high price in the battle against *zenglendos* (gangsters): eight have been killed in recent months. The inadequacies of the police and the courts have encouraged people to take justice into their own hands. Eight suspected *zenglendos* were lynched in Port-au-Prince in a single week.

Unrest among demobilised troops is also causing concern. Several hundred have demonstrated noisily in the capital, demanding back pay and threatening to take up arms if their demands are not met.

The recent freeing in the US of Emmanuel Constant, head of the Haiti Front for Advancement and Progress (Fraph), has caused renewed friction between Washington and Port-au-Prince.

Constant ran a militia set up by the junta after its September 1991 coup against Aristide. When Aristide returned to power, Constant fled to the US.

A Haitian court sentenced him in his absence to hard labour for life. An embittered Constant told several newspapers that he was a CIA agent. That seems likely, as the US has still not extradited him — to the indignation of the Haitian government.

(July 4)

West revives its interest in Afghanistan

Frédéric Bobin

THE WEST has been accused of being cynical in its treatment of Afghanistan. First, it fought the Red Army using the the Afghan mojahedin as proxies. Then, when it suited, it pulled out of the cold war's last major battlefield, leaving the country drained of its lifeblood.

The United Nations organised high-profile interventions in Somalia and in Cambodia, so why did it not do the same in Afghanistan, which had served the cause of the "free nations" so well?

Some argue that the resistance fighters' former friends in the West lost interest in Afghanistan because it had become, in their eyes, the arena of incomprehensible medieval vendettas between Pathans, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazararas.

But Afghanistan is fast emerging from oblivion. In recent weeks the international community has begun to show renewed interest in a country where there have been spectacular changes on the political and military scene.

In April, the UN Security Council re-examined the case of Afghanistan after a silence lasting seven years. The recent visit to Afghanistan and neighbouring capitals by Robin Raphel, the US assistant secretary of state for South Asia, is just one of several indications that Washington is again interested in a part of the world it deserted somewhat hastily once the Soviet Red Army pulled out in 1989.

Since spring the US has been working on a Bosnia-style plan that would culminate in an international conference and the implementation of an arms embargo. Such solicitude for Afghanistan would be almost touching if it did not disguise motives that amounted to much more than a legitimate concern for peace.

Washington is striving to regain a foothold in Afghanistan in order to counter the increasing role played there by its sworn enemy, Iran. Tehran has been reaping the dividends of its numerous efforts to mediate between opposing Afghan factions and has succeeded in building up a network of "friends" that extends well beyond the Shi'ite Hazararas whom it has traditionally protected.

Iran's diplomatic activism dates from late last year, when the Taliban — a new force of Pathan religious students that Tehran believed was manipulated by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the US — seized Herat, a city near the Afghan-Iranian border.

The Pasdaran — Iranian "guardians of the revolution" — made an incursion into Afghan territory at that time in a bid to clear border areas of the Taliban, orthodox Sunnis who were seen as enemies of Persian-speakers.

Since that crisis, Iran has effected a *rapprochement* with the more liberal Afghan regime headed by President Burhanuddin Rabbani, conveniently forgetting it had earlier stirred up Shi'ite opposition against him.

The two governments now get on like a house on fire: they have concluded several co-operation agreements in such areas as health, education and infrastructure, and Iran has recently opened two consulates outside Kabul.

The US is particularly worried about Iran's game plan because it has been put into action at a time when the influence of Washington's regional ally — Pakistan — is waning. Islamabad has been unsuccessful in its attempt to regain the hold it had over mojahedin groups during the anti-Soviet war, when it dished out CIA money and weapons.

The Pakistanis, out of hostility to a predominantly Tajik regime in Kabul they could not influence, made the mistake of supporting armed opposition movements that failed miserably.

Islamabad's manoeuvres simply increased anti-Pakistani feeling within the Kabul government, which reacted by moving closer not only to Tehran and Moscow but also to New Delhi. They also resulted in a possible nightmare scenario: since its creation in 1947, Pakistan's main strategic motivation has been to prevent the formation of an alliance between Afghanistan and India.

PAKISTAN'S setbacks were causing concern in Washington, which, despite a slight warming of relations with India as the cold war came to an end, continues to regard Islamabad as the keystone of its regional strategy.

The US is worried that developments in Afghanistan will have an adverse effect on Pakistan, eroding its defence capacity vis-à-vis its hereditary enemy, India, and barring access to the emerging markets of ex-Soviet central Asia.

These handicaps are compounded by the risk that the ethnic and religious turmoil in Afghanistan may spill over its borders. Pakistan, a loosely-knit nation held together solely by the Muslim religion, lives under the permanent threat of ancient regional rivalries.

Most feared are the proud and unpredictable Pathan tribes whose lands are bisected by Pakistan's western border. Nothing frightens Islamabad more than the emergence of a Pathan nationalist movement, which would weaken Pakistan.

Another danger is that anti-US Islamism may prove contagious. In this respect, the recent appointment in Kabul of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who heads the fundamentalist Hizbe Islami movement, as Afghan prime minister is not good news for Pakistan.

Hekmatyar, a former protégé of the Pakistani secret service, has some scores to settle with Benazir Bhutto's government, which, under US pressure, stopped supporting him after it was revealed he had links with those responsible for the bomb attack on New York's World Trade Centre.

Worse, Bhutto's own Islamist opposition, the Jamaat Islami party, must be pleased with the improving fortunes of Hekmatyar, with whom it has always had close ties. Bhutto's government, which is engaged in a running battle with Jamaat, may become more vulnerable with the emergence of a new order in Afghanistan.

The fact that Tehran seems to have a finger in every pie, that Kabul is poised to adopt an anti-US policy, and that Islamabad looks increasingly weak is a source of great concern to Washington. It has prompted the State Department's renewed interest in Afghan affairs. The question to be asked at this stage is: can the damage be repaired after so many years of neglect?

(July 4)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 14 1996

Michel Guerrin reviews an exhibition of China images and, below, meets Magnum veteran Marc Riboud

Tightrope walker

THE globe-trotting photographer, Marc Riboud, is back in the news with an exhibition at the Centre National de la Photographie in Paris. Still youthful despite his shock of white hair, the 73-year-old Riboud focuses this time on one of the countries he knows best: China.

As he himself points out in a short statement displayed at the beginning of the exhibition, he is "probably the only Westerner who has been able to continue taking photographs in China since the fifties".

This makes him a privileged observer. When he talks about "being able to", he is alluding indirectly to the countless complications that most "long-noses" — as the Chinese call westerners — run into as soon as they pick up a camera and start taking photographs in China.

Both the exhibition, Marc Riboud, 40 Ans de Photographie en Chine (1956-1996), and the book of the same name (published by Nathan) that accompanies it, have a deliberately pedagogical flavour.

They are divided into three sections: "The Survival of Ancient China and Tradition in the Fifties", "Puritanical Maoism and Tradition Faced with Modernity", and "The Extremes of Modernity and the Economic Boom". The titles of each section say a lot about Riboud's determination to toe a particular line.

Working in black and white, he points up some of the spectacular contrasts that exist between the China of old — ancestral and revolutionary China — and the country now being swamped by capitalism.

A stone statue of the Great Helmsman (1971) is representative of the past; a plastic Superman (1994) typifies the present. An aristocratic-looking old woman — a fossil — is contrasted with a carefree pin-up. Workers, teachers, craftsmen, Maoist activists, children, dilapidated houses and expanses of open countryside seem worlds away from the ubiquitous dollar, posters plugging the American way of life, an inflatable doll with a Pierre Cardin label, high heels, flashy cars, mobile phones and night clubs.

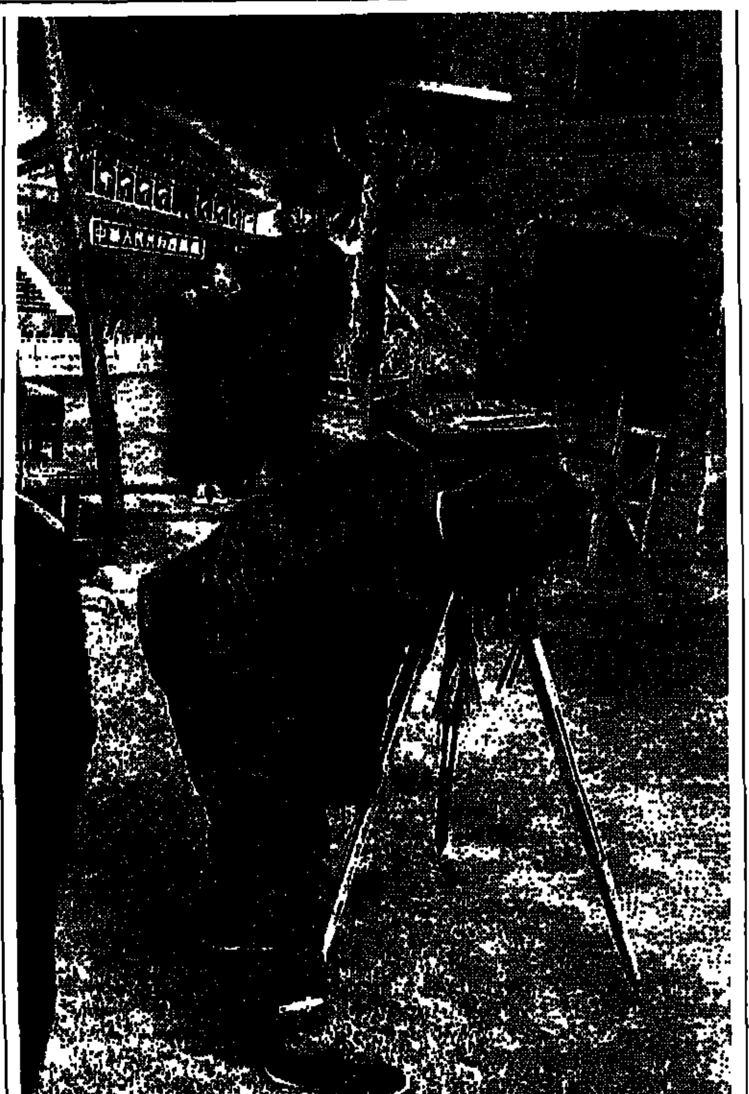
Riboud has no doubt where his preferences lie. He says he longs for the "beauties of a 1,000-year-old culture [which] seem to be fading away before our very eyes". He goes on: "The whole of the East we used to love for its permanence of mind and matter is abruptly being transmogrified into an extreme form of the West, in a way that resembles a speeded-up film of the process we ourselves have undergone."

No one would dispute that. But is not Riboud forgetting that Maoism was responsible for the deaths of millions of people and a wave of atrocities? He was not present when Mao came to power; he did not experience at first hand the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution or Tiananmen Square.

Like many other leftwing intellectuals, Riboud somehow hoped that the new China would give the people back their self-respect. But he was unable to photograph the horrors that ensued and can therefore only offer up a pacified, squeaky-clean image of the country.

This is precisely what makes his exhibition so fascinating. It poses key questions about the nature of photo-reportage. What is the meaning of pictures which give an account of a country without making any reference to its darkest hours? What kind of China will be perceived by later generations who are not necessarily familiar with historical fact, when they see such skilfully photographed and "beautiful" images of daily life.

It is edifying to compare Riboud's work with the horrifying pictures published by the Chinese dissident, Harry Wu, in Laogai, The Chinese Gulag (Westview Press). Wu, who as the son of a banker was a perfect example of an "enemy of the people", spent 19 years in labour camps before fleeing to the United States in 1985.



A photographer's studio not far from the Forbidden City in Beijing, photographed by Marc Riboud in 1957

After obtaining American nationality he returned secretly to China and took photographs of public executions (carried out "as a deterrent to others"), of people detained in prisons disguised as factories or state farms, and of the crackdown on monks in Lhasa, Tibet.

Riboud's approach is quite different. First, the captions which accompany his photographs in the book and the exhibition are written in the first person singular. China by Riboud is first and foremost Riboud's China, in the best photo-reportage tradition of the agency he worked for, the Magnum Group, founded by Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Werner Bischof and David Seymour.

Riboud's aim is to "affect first and foremost through the senses and not through ideas", in other words to move and thus give food for thought. He gives priority to formal considerations, repeatedly pointing to visual parallels between movements, faces, posters, objects and people.

It is then up to exhibition visitors or readers of his book, if they so desire, to delve deeper and verify their impressions by reading Riboud's captions. These are extremely subtle. They demonstrate that Riboud, determined democrat that he is, consistently played cat and mouse with the people he describes as his "guardian angels" — minders whose job was not only to guide him but to keep tabs on him.

The other side of Chinese society — the repression, the violence, the starvation, the poverty — can be sensed as long as one keeps one's eyes open. In one photograph, for example, which shows a group of navvies hard at work building a road, a young man is wearing a rather distinguished-looking pair of glasses. It is neither the best nor the best-known picture in the exhibition, but it seems to illustrate the fate of an intellectual forced to join a road gang.

The caption confirms one's hunch: "A whole generation of students, forced to carry out work of the hardest kind, was sacrificed. Most of them are now unemployed or dropouts."

OTHER much more spectacular pictures have ensured Riboud's reputation as a photographer. The viewer will probably be more impressed by his images of a milling crowd, exotic landscapes, fraught facial expressions, the anger of an anti-American demonstrator or a jogger on the Great Wall.

All of them are pictures that could be interpreted as verging dangerously on agitprop, were it not for the fact that Riboud takes the precaution, in his captions, of bringing his intentions into focus.

It is by dealing a kind of glancing blow that Riboud comes to terms with China's extremely violent side. It is a perilous exercise, and he probably feels more at ease in the contemporary period, when the traditional face of China is being papered over, patchwork-style, with the trappings of capitalism.

Riboud handles all this — the surface gloss, the sexy posters, a group of antiquated bicycles passing under a four-storey spaghetti junction — with the skill of a tightrope walker poised above the void.

Marc Riboud, 40 Ans de Photographie en Chine (1956-1996), Centre National de la Photographie, Paris. Closed Tuesday. Until July 29

'My pictures should be seen as impressions'

THE photographs you have taken in China over a period of 40 years don't really illustrate the violence or the repression of the regime. Doesn't that leave you open to criticism?

I didn't witness the main events that occurred in China, such as the Cultural Revolution. But who could have taken pictures of them anyway? No one. In the sixties, I wanted to go and take landscape photographs of the Huang Shan mountains, but I was forbidden to do so. I subsequently learnt that 1.5 million people had died of starvation in that region.

When you can't use your eyes, the job has to be done by words instead. Hence the countless books on Maoism. I myself, in my earlier book on China [Instantanés De Voyage (Travel Snaps), Arthaud, 1980], wrote about the millions of deaths caused by the regime. My captions also help to put things in perspective.

Having said that, I don't believe in illustrating repression or listing statistics. On the occasion of 20 years of Maoism, Time magazine published documents depicting prisoners. But it didn't really add up to much. I think I've managed to get the feel of the Cultural Revolution in one or two pictures.

Can you give me an example?

There's that photograph, taken in 1965, of a man at work: one realises he doesn't even have the needle and thread he needs to mend his tattered clothes. There's the picture of students doing hard labour, and the rather alarming group of youths carrying wooden guns, who foreshadow the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution.

How much room for manoeuvre did the censors allow you?

It was a very subtle regime. The Hundred Flowers campaign, for example, encouraged intellectuals to express themselves so they could be more easily identified and later brought to heel.

I was accompanied by a "guardian angel". Some of my requests which I thought quite ordinary were turned down, whereas other apparently more contentious ones were accepted.

For instance, I was authorised to be present at a dinner with Mao, and I was allowed to approach him without protocol getting in the way. But the most difficult thing of all was to get into schools or factories.

In big cities I suppose I could say it was quite easy for me to get lost. So I often got lost . . . I would find myself on my own, facing people who never put their hands in front of the lens. The Chinese never allow themselves to lose face. If they don't want to be photographed, they vanish.

But doesn't your work lie because of the constraints that were placed on you?

Photography always lies. Somebody who once came to see me exclaimed, in front of a 1957 photo: "Oh, what wonderful *joie de vivre*!" But that was a time when the country was extremely poor and living in a straitjacket of repression.

What meaning do street scenes have when you can't see what goes on behind closed doors? My pictures should be looked at as notes or impressions. I describe what goes on away from the limelight. I like to bring out details like that.

What I show in that 1957 photograph is that the people in the crowd aren't jostling each other — though in the background there's a notice asking them not to spit on the ground.

Could your book be described as a piece of informational reportage?

Its 120 photographs represent a few frozen seconds. They show a handful of Chinese and an often Surrealist country. They amount to no more than a few trifling bits and pieces. I'm no ethnologist. I went round China and did a lot of walking. I was in a kind of daze — I can't read Chinese and I didn't talk to people. I'm not a specialist.

Is the book informational? I simply show that the country has changed a lot, that everything is superimposed on, or added to, something else. The predominant philosophy was once Mao's thoughts; now it is money.

You seem to have harsher words to say about the excesses of the current situation than about the ravages of Maoism.

What I'm most worried about are the past 20 years. Nobody misses Maoism, and everyone enjoys a higher standard of living. But it has all taken place in a frighteningly brutal way. The country has simply chucked its age-old culture into the wastepaper basket.

Here again, there are much worse things happening than what I show. I know a couple where the wife is forced to prostitute herself, with her mother's consent, in order to pay the rent. And to think that family values were once sacrosanct in China . . .

There's terrible corruption. There are no more bookshops, no free speech, no free press, no right to strike. There's no such thing as town-planning. The destitute rub shoulders with those who worship Mammon. And there are no checks and balances. It's very depressing. In fact I've lost any desire to visit China again.

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 14 1996

The Washington Post

America Pays a High Price for Cheap Oil

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

THE INITIAL American response to the terror bombing that killed 19 U.S. airmen in Saudi Arabia has been to mourn and to hang tough. President Clinton hit the right, necessary note by immediately vowing that the nation would not weaken its military presence in the Persian Gulf out of fear.

But during last week's celebration of America's 220th Independence Day the United States needs to make another, longer-term vow as well: to remove the national dependence on imported oil that helped put those airmen in harm's way in the first place.

The slain airmen were not in the kingdom on some abstract, charitable mission to contain Saddam Hussein's predatory Iraqi army and protect the Saudi monarchy. They were also protecting America's druglike reliance on cheap energy that pours out of the oil taps of the Middle East.

In choosing to station combat aircraft and about 5,000 troops in the Persian Gulf to protect the world's most important oil fields, the United States has also chosen to involve itself in the region's murderous and tangled politics. Because of the way we live now, we have given ourselves little choice.

The list of people who need to be asked if they did everything they could have done to prevent the truck bomb assassinations does not stop with the base commander in Dhahran, the brass at the Pentagon and officials in the Clinton Cabinet. In a more general sense, the list should also include every American citizen.

And the honest answer in most cases is no, we did not do everything we could have.

We refused to get serious about developing national energy alternatives to cheap oil. As a nation, we rebelled against higher energy taxes and pricing oil products to discourage their waste and misuse. After brief spells of panic in 1973 and 1979, we continued to deepen America's dependence on imported Middle Eastern oil.

National discussion of an energy policy today consists of Bob Dole proposing a gas tax cut of 4.3 cents a gallon — at a time when he claims that he wants to erase America's budget deficits — and Bill Clinton saying that's fine by him.

The politicians indulge the electorate rather than making an appeal to the tradition of independence and sacrifice that the Fourth of July symbolizes. The last president who did make that appeal, and made energy policy a keystone of his government, was the hapless, one-term Democrat Jimmy Carter.

This is not a partisan issue. In November 1973, no less a Republican than Richard Nixon, responding to the Arab oil embargo, called on the nation to pursue "Project Independence" as it had pursued the Apollo and Manhattan Projects: "Let us pledge that by 1980, under Project Independence, we shall be able to meet America's energy needs from America's own energy resources."

In 1973, America consumed 17.3 million barrels of oil a day, importing 6.2 million or 35 percent. One out of every 10 imported barrels came from Saudi Arabia. By 1980, consumption and import patterns had not changed.

Last year, Americans used 17.7 million barrels a day. Imports rose to 8.8 million — 50 percent of consumption. Saudi Arabia accounted for 15 percent of U.S. imports, and 86 percent of all U.S. imports from the Persian Gulf.

The small rise in total U.S. consumption over 22 years shows that big strides have been made in energy conservation. Since Nixon's speech markets have been in glut more often than in shortage. Oil companies and others use the same statistics I cite to argue that Nixon and Carter were wrong: There has always been and always will be cheap oil available for Americans. Relax.

But the death of the 19 airmen at Dhahran testifies to the real cost that Americans are paying for continuing to rely so heavily on energy supplies that can be disrupted at the drop of a crown, or the rise of a madman.

Oil is not the only reason we are in the Persian Gulf for the foreseeable future. Had George Bush listened to those who said he should not take on Iraq frontally and immediately, Saddam today would have a sophisticated nuclear, chemical and biological warfare capability at his fingertips.

But that was not obvious at the time to the American public (or the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). Saddam's threat to Saudi oil fields was. It triggered the significant escalation of stationed American troops in the Gulf that has apparently enraged Saddam, Saudi domestic extremists or whoever set off that truck bomb.

America's first task is to work with the Saudis to find the bombers and punish them. But it is also time for Americans to get serious about alternatives to cheap Middle East oil, and to depending on high visibility, high vulnerability military bases on inhospitable soil.



Tangled remains . . . A US air force officer surveys the ruined building in Dhahran where 19 airmen died PHOTOGRAPH GREG MARINOVICH

The End of Russian Communism

EDITORIAL

IT TAKES no great skill as a soothsayer to see grave problems in Russia's future. Start with a possibly ailing president, proceed through the unfulfillable campaign promises he made and end with all the pains of transition that no amount of democracy can quickly wipe away: declining farms, despoiled environment, depressed economy.

But this is not the time to dwell on such troubles. This is a time to savor the remarkable triumph of the Russian people. Despite all their suffering and shrugging off all predictions to the contrary, Russian voters made history last week by advancing democracy in their country and by rejecting, once and for all, the false promises of the Communists.

Even three months ago, few predicted such an outcome. Russians have endured an economic slump by many measures deeper than the U.S. Great Depression. They are battered by unfamiliar crime and brazen corruption. They have no tradition of democracy. Nothing would have been more natural than for them to blame democracy itself and accept the Communists' mirage of a return to the stability (with all its acknowledged hardships) of the totalitarian past.

At the same time, President Boris Yeltsin was episodically ill, inconstant in his devotion to liberal democracy and saddled with an unpopular and immoral war he had started inside his own country, in Chechnya. Nothing would have been more natural, it was said, than for him to steal the election through fraud or cancel it.

Instead, he contested it as if his life depended on it, shaking hands and frugging from Kaliningrad to Siberia. And Russian voters, faced with no appealing choices, still turned out in numbers U.S. voters never match. In the first round, nearly two-thirds of them registered their disapproval of current circumstances by voting for candidates other than Mr. Yeltsin. But in the second round, when it counted, they showed the wisdom and fortitude to vote against the greater of two evils. Mr. Yeltsin defeated Communist Gennady Zyuganov, 53 percent to 40 percent.

Had any of the more "natural" results come true, the Clinton administration surely would have come in for abuse for naive optimism and unwarranted support for Mr. Yeltsin's reforms. So it seems only decent to say that the proper policy toward Russia now is the policy Mr. Clinton's administration has shaped, with some bumps along the way, during the past four years: aid to Russia when it bolsters U.S. interests and helps secure democracy and prosperity there, clarity in delineating what is and is not acceptable in relations with neighbors and other nations.

Ecuadoran Populist Is Elected President

Gabriel Escobar in Guayaquil

ABDALA BUCARAM, a populist whose message found a ready audience among Ecuador's poor and disenfranchised, exceeded even his supporters' most optimistic expectations on Sunday to win an overwhelming victory in a hard-fought presidential runoff election.

According to projections by the nation's leading broadcast networks, Bucaram looks set to win about 54 percent of the vote against 45 percent for opposing candidate Jaime Nebot Saadi, a moderate who was long considered the front-runner. Nebot conceded defeat shortly after the polls closed on Sunday. Official results were not expected until later in the week.

The result represents a remarkable triumph for Bucaram, 44, the grandson of Lebanese immigrants and a controversial figure whose fiery oratory has won him converts among the masses, suspicion among the business classes and now the presidency on his third attempt. Dismissed as a demagogue, ridiculed for his Chaplin-like moustache and envied for his campaigning skills, the one-time Olympic track and field star mounted an impressive campaign that focused on wooing grassroots voters and, in the process, managed to sidetrack the establishment candidate's well-oiled campaign machine.

When he assumes office next month, Bucaram will cut an uncommon figure among Latin American presidents and especially here in this Nevada-size nation of 11 million astride the equator — which over the last four years has been led by the staid and grandfatherly President Sixto Duran Ballen. An avid athlete, Bucaram ran the 100 meters in the 1972 Munich Olympics, plays soccer every day and even has a small soccer/basketball court in his back yard.

Both Bucaram and Nebot, 49, criticized market-oriented, inflation-fighting government policies that have been in place since 1992, even though both promised to promote fiscal responsibility and encourage foreign investment. But Bucaram's platform in many ways echoed the old populism that periodically resounds through Latin America. At a time when Ecuador's Latin neighbors are struggling to address the needs of the poor while adhering to tight fiscal programs, Bucaram's triumph is bound to send a powerful message across the region.

The outgoing Duran Ballen government imposed unpopular constraints on public spending to combat a 60 percent inflation rate, and analysts here say Nebot's defeat may be interpreted as a rejection of that policy because Nebot was associated with it — despite his attempts to differentiate his platform from that of Duran Ballen.

In comments made on Sunday, Bucaram seemed to anticipate some of the questions that his victory raised, particularly in business circles. Several times he stressed his interest in attracting foreign investment and encouraging private enterprise. At the same time, he extended a hand to his political foes and those who did not vote for him.

"I leave aside hatred and revenge . . . Ecuador needs all of us," he said, calling his victory "a triumph for the poor, a triumph for all." At another point, he urged the business community to "maintain calm" while he put his government together.

AP in Quito adds: Bucaram, founder of the Roldosista Party, was clearly trying to reduce the divisiveness of a campaign in which each candidate tried to paint the other as evil — Bucaram had referred to Nebot as the "Antichrist."

At campaign rallies, Bucaram sang, danced and screamed as he delivered speeches like a repent-or-be-damned preacher — except that his "sermons" were peppered with curses and off-color comments.

"I am El Loco [the Crazy One] who is going to win the presidency," he told mesmerized crowds, calling himself "scourge of the oligarchy" and the "force of the poor."

Nebot, who leads the Social Christian Party, retained his critical edge in defeat, saying that Bucaram's presidency would begin "an era of the lie."

And he warned: "If they don't solve the problems, then I will be leading a constructive opposition to the new government."

Immigrant Workers Inundate Atlanta

William Branigin

AFTER paying a smuggler $1,000 to sneak him into the United States and working a minimum-wage job as a dishwasher in Florida, Rigoberto Mejia saw fortune finally turn his way when he arrived in this boom town preparing to host the Summer Olympics.

He landed a job as an asbestos remover at a suburban construction site and stood to earn $47,500 this year. But unfortunately for the 29-year-old Mexican, the job was at a Veterans Administration hospital, which made him a target of a recent presidential order aimed at rooting out illegal alien workers from federal projects.

Caught with seven co-workers in a June 12 raid by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents, Mejia was soon on his way back to Mexico. Summarily deported. A relatively rare misfortune in Atlanta.

As Atlanta has busied itself with preparations for the Games, illegal immigrants have been flooding in, and the government seems unable to stem the tide. Despite stepped-up raids on federal work sites, INS agents acknowledge their efforts are hardly impeding the underground labor force that continues to swell this booming metropolitan area of 3.3 million people.

Construction sites are everywhere, many of them employing workers that agents suspect are in the country illegally. But with the INS preoccupied by Olympics security preparations with other federal agencies and concentrating on enforcement of the executive order, officials say, many illegal aliens working at private-sector construction sites, restaurants, hotels and other service-industry businesses are essentially getting a bye.

Already a rapidly growing metropolis before the Olympic expansion started, the Atlanta area has become a major stop on an illegal immigration pipeline that brings thousands of workers from the U.S.-Mexican border to the East Coast.

In February, the crash in Maryland of a rental truck crammed with Mexican and Guatemalan illegal immigrants led to the discovery of an operation that had also delivered human cargo to Atlanta, INS officials said. In March, an INS crackdown, Operation Mountain Passes, intercepted more than 1,200 illegal aliens who were being smuggled through Colorado, many of them en route to Southeastern states.

According to Joe Greene, the INS district director in Denver, "many of those heading for Georgia said they were going to find jobs in the Atlanta area in service industries because of the Olympics."

Recently, INS agents found 34 Mexican illegal immigrants locked in a horse trailer in a motel parking lot near Atlanta and arrested the American driver. The Mexicans, packed shoulder to shoulder in the 8-by-20-foot trailer for three days without food or water, were being smuggled to jobs in north Georgia by an Arizona-based ring, INS officials said.

With 52 agents to cover four states — Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and South Carolina — the INS in Atlanta has its hands full dealing with the truck and trailer loads of aliens that have been pouring into the Southeast. "These loads have been coming in here like crazy this past year," said Russ Parry, an INS supervisory special agent.

The influx of both legal and illegal immigrants has begun to change the face of Atlanta in recent years, especially in the northern suburbs where Asian and Latino newcomers have congregated.

In recent months, the INS office in the city has been inundated by tips, many of them from U.S. construction workers, about suspected illegal aliens. The tipsters often complain that illegal workers are taking jobs from Americans or receiving preference in overtime assignments, perhaps because employers are able to exploit them in ways that would not be possible with American workers.

"Who's an illegal going to complain to?" said Charlie Key, an official of the North Georgia Building and Construction Trades Council. "They're wide open to be victimized."

Of the eight recently arrested, one was freed when he was able to show legal status. Mejia and three other Mexicans were bused to Dallas for repatriation across the U.S.-Mexican border. The remaining three — a Peruvian, a Nicaraguan and a Honduran — were released pending a hearing before an immigration judge.

A cellmate, Victor Lopez, 22, said he and his asbestos co-workers at the VA hospital were given adequate protective gear, but that the job was still difficult and risky. American employees had come and gone, he said.

"They didn't want to work in that kind of business," Lopez said of the Americans. "They would want more money because it's dangerous." Besides, he said, his bosses could "push harder on Hispanics" than on Americans.

Tokyo Offers Unique Fishing

Kevin Sullivan in Tokyo

FISHING at the Ichigaya Fish Center isn't much different from dropping a line into the lobster tank at Safeway. Twenty tons of carp are stocked in five concrete tanks, tucked between a busy commuter train station and a traffic-choked downtown street in the middle of Tokyo. Every day hundreds of fishermen each pay $6.50 admission, rent a pole, sit elbow to elbow on milk crates and drop a line into slimy green water.

Many fishermen might say this is like hunting bunnies in a cage. But for the anglers of Ichigaya, their version of urban fishing is relaxing, challenging and uniquely suited to jam-packed, concrete-encased Tokyo.

"What other choice do we have?" said Jun Kobayashi, 35, who wore a tan business suit and shiny leather dress shoes as he sat on a crate one Saturday morning, dragged on a cigarette and waited for a carp to bite on the little ball of fish meal on his hook. "This is better than nothing."

With 30 million people crammed into Tokyo, everything is built small. Cars have retractable side mirrors to fit narrow alleys; baby strollers are half the size of American models. Golfers practice on tiny netted-in rooftop driving ranges; admission at many public swimming pools is for 45 minutes; people pitch tents on a crowded lot near the end of the runway at Haneda airport, barbecuing to the scream of jet engines.

So a concrete fishing hole with fishermen lined up like so many birds on a wire makes sense, in a Tokyo sort of way. To Hitoshi Koga, it might as well be Montana, even though A Subway Runs Through It would make a lousy book title.

Koga came to Ichigaya dressed for serious fishing in an L.L. Bean fishing vest with lots of Velcro and zippered pockets and a camouflage cap attached with a small cord. Gazing out from behind sunglasses, he conjured up the rugged feel of life in Maine (or at least outlet shopping in Freeport).

Next to his folding fishing stool, Koga kept his tackle box, cigarettes, an empty coffee can and a big bag of chemical-green fish-meal bait. As the teacher and sometime writer dipped his pole into the five-foot-deep tank, the screech of brakes signaled the arrival of another commuter train into busy Ichigaya station behind him. Up the concrete bank in front of him, traffic churned noisily as a stoplight turned green. A dead carp floated belly up near the end of his pole.

"I have loved fishing since I was a child," said Koga, 53. "But if I want to go fishing in real nature, it's a whole day's project. This place is 10 minutes on the subway from my home."

Koga, who fishes here almost every day, said urban fishing has a "special place" in the fishing world. "It's very difficult fishing," he said. "The carp who live here are so used to being caught, they already have many hooks in their mouths. They hate that. They don't want to be fished, but they are fighting hunger. So there is a real psychological battle between me and the carp."

Ichigaya is near what was once the moat of a shogun's castle. Carp, a sign of health and good fortune in Japanese tradition, have always been stocked in palace moats. The Imperial Palace's impressive moats are still filled with them, fat orange ones that some Ichigaya fishermen said they'd love to have a shot at hooking — if it wouldn't land them in jail.

Admission to Ichigaya is about $6.50 an hour for men and about $5.50 an hour for "women and junior high school students," who management believes are less likely to pressure fish stock.

Fishermen are allowed to take home one carp an hour, although few do. Carp are greasy to begin with, and living in the thick water of Ichigaya makes them fairly poor eating. Mainly, people trade in fish for coupons for more fishing time.

Yasuhito Watanabe, 33, and his wife, Keiko, 24, fish at Ichigaya about four hours every weekend. He's been coming for years and loves it, and recently he started bringing his wife.

"It's fun when I catch fish, but it's not fun when I don't," she said.

A few minutes later, her rod jerked. She raised it high and it bent like the spine of a frightened cat, then went still. A carp had stolen her bait and slithered away.

Two hours on a milk crate, and she still hadn't caught a fish.



In the Shadow of a Colossus

Walter Russell Mead

A NEW TIME FOR MEXICO
By Carlos Fuentes
Translated from the Spanish
by Marina Gutman Castaneda
and the author
Farrar Straus Giroux. 216 pp. $22

"WE TURN on the television sets of the Mexican mind," writes Carlos Fuentes in A New Time For Mexico, "and every night we hear the same evening news. Top of the news: THE SPANISH HAVE CONQUERED MEXICO. Second item: THE GRINGOS STOLE HALF OUR TERRITORY. After that, murders, arson, kidnappings and five-legged cows."

The murders and five-legged cows have been coming thicker than usual since the policies of former Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari collapsed ignominiously in 1994-95. Salinas had promised through the magic of NAFTA to turn Mexico into a First World country. Instead, as Fuentes makes clear, the Mexican scene remains a kind of Jurassic Park inhabited by political dinosaurs and, increasingly, by a new species Fuentes calls "drugosaurs" — figures who combine the corruption and impunity long associated with Mexico's terminally corrupt ruling party with the money and brutality associated with the drug trade.

The American establishment has fallen silent on the subjects of Mexico and Salinas. Nobody wants to admit that for the last six years the United States utterly misread its closest, most populous neighbor. The only people in the United States who want to talk about either Mexico or NAFTA today are people like Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan. The result is more than depressing. At the moment, the United States seems more likely to build a wall along the common border than to undertake any serious initiative to help Mexico grow.

For Mexico, of course, the collapse was more than an embarrassment; it was one of the most humiliating fiascos in a painful national history. Once again it seemed that Mexico was doomed to fail while the United States went forward from strength to strength. Mexico's economy and political regime alike seemed unreformable and unworkable.



As illegal immigrants cross the Rio Grande between Mexico and the US, Carlos Fuentes fears his country's 'new order' PHOTO BEN GIBSON

This is the background for Carlos Fuentes's new book, and in it we can see a passionate and committed Mexican intellectual struggling with his country's unhappy present and uncertain future. Combining impressionistic accounts of the Mexican national soul with remarkably lucid summaries of Mexican history, snippets of literary autobiography, policy prescriptions and personal journals, A New Time For Mexico is a challenging book, but the North American reader will find few more helpful introductions to the Mexican national crisis.

At the moment, the US seems more likely to build a wall along the border than to help Mexico grow

Unfortunately, the policy-wonk bits of the book are not very successful. Fuentes has a list, but he doesn't have a plan. Mexico must become more democratic. It must open itself to market forces while preserving, and even extending, a network of social benefits to protect and educate its poor. NAFTA must be reformed; the United States and Canada ought to be more generous to Mexico; Europe and the newly prosperous states of East Asia ought to be more involved. Mexican political parties must become more honest; they must agree on a fair and transparent system for future elections; fraud must be rooted out of politics.

Well, yes, of course. But how?

Fuentes is more impressive when he dissects the flawed psychology behind Mexico's repeated one-sided dashes for modernization in both the 19th and 20th centuries. For Salinas, like Porfirio Diaz a century ago, progress meant the Europeanization or, most recently, the Yankification of Mexico. The psychological and emotional landscape of the Mexican countryside had to be exchanged for the values and perceptions of the Manchester School one hundred years ago, and those of the Harvard Business School today.

Mexico, says Fuentes, needs another kind of modernization: one built on the celebration and affirmation of its national character and civilization. Rather than the autocratic, top-down reforms of a Salinas, Mexico needs decentralization and democratization.

This again seems indisputably true — and exquisitely difficult to do. And it involves a revolution in Mexican thinking beyond anything Fuentes contemplates in this book.

For Fuentes and for much of Mexican elite opinion, Mexico confronts the Colossus of the North alone. It is not just that many Mexican intellectuals dismiss such "backward" countries as Guatemala and Honduras in much the same way many United States intellectuals dismiss Mexico. It is that for Fuentes — and for his countrymen — even countries like Brazil, Chile and Argentina do not loom very large in the hemispheric political and economic environment.

In the early 1980s, Mexico refused to make common cause with fellow-debtor nations like Argentina and Brazil. Later in the 1980s it moved ahead with NAFTA, rejoicing that the other Latin American nations were excluded from this new, special relationship with the United States. By insisting on handling its relations with the United States on a bilateral basis, Mexico magnifies its weakness and its isolation. By imagining itself as isolated — so far from God, so close to the United States in Porfirio Diaz's famous phrase — Mexico achieves a kind of glamour and dignity, but also dooms itself to endless impotence and futility.

Many things will have to happen before Mexico's political system and its economy can fulfill the hopes of Mexico's people; one of those changes will have to involve a rediscovery and a celebration of Mexico's connections with its neighbors to the south. Until then, look for more murders and five-legged cows. Mexico is in the midst of a profound, possibly a violent restructuring.

We must all hope that it will be sane, patriotic and thoughtful humanists like Carlos Fuentes, rather than drugosaurs and dinosaurs, who shape Mexico's new order. And the United States can never forget that, should Mexico's problems dramatically worsen, no wall can be high enough, no river deep enough, to keep those problems out of our lives.

Walter Russell Mead is the President's Fellow at the World Policy Institute at the New School for Social Research in New York.

Tests of Strength

Peter Franck

WHAT FALLS AWAY
By Tracy Daugherty
Norton. 219 pp. $22.50

IF YOU ever made a wrong career move, take heart: You didn't mess up as badly as Jon Chase. Newly appointed arts commissioner in Tilton, Nevada, the middle-aged baby boomer arrives with his family to find a military town that is "100 per cent culture-dead." More worrisome than his tiny budget and unfinished office are the missile tests that rock their "temporary" trailer home close to the Nevada Test Site, the hottest spot in post-Cold War America. "Dad," asks his teenage son Scott, "this is the only job you could find?"

Yet Chase's professional challenge (to subvert the military's prescription of "patriotic art") is a snap compared with his family obligations. His mother, a stroke victim hallucinating wildly in a Texas nursing home, is inconsolable, as is his enfeebled father. Scott, suffering from Tourette's syndrome, is often beyond his reach. And though he is a loving husband to Peg, a ballerina turned performance artist, he loses her to her "sisters" demonstrating at the Test Site.

At the center of Daugherty's second novel is the loneliness of the conscientious middle-aged breadwinner whose own parents are slipping away just as the needs of his family intensify. It's a flawed center, unfortunately, because, though the nursing-home vignettes are memorable, the other characterizations are shadowy. Scott is just the sum of his symptoms and Peg bends with the needs of the storyline.

We are left with a broad-brush picture of an environmentally poisoned West, haunted by "high-tech spirits" and run by crudely drawn brass hats.

Chase does a little sleuthing and there is a closing confrontation between demonstrators and vigilantes but action writing is not Daugherty's forte.

Still Not Out of the Red

Julia Watson

WAKING THE TEMPESTS
Ordinary Life In the New Russia
By Eleanor Randolph
Simon & Schuster. 448 pp. $25

THE FIRST time I went through customs at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, I was seven months pregnant. My husband went ahead with the suitcases and opened the first of them. Inside, pressed edge to edge, was row upon row of Western condoms we had brought as barter and gifts for our four-year posting to the then Soviet Union. The young military-uniformed inspector lifted his eyes and ran them over my inflated stomach. "So," he observed to my husband, "yours don't work either." It was a splendid introduction to Russian phlegm.

Of all the postings to which American correspondents have been sent in this century, only Vietnam and the Soviet Union/Russia have inspired so many memoirs, analyses and novels. This has as much to do, I suspect, with the passionate level of intensity at which life in both places is lived as with the critical roles they played in America's history. Eleanor Randolph, who worked for The Washington Post in Russia from 1991 to 1993, has written the latest, an account as heart-wrenching and compelling as the country.

What is odd is that though the book is subtitled Ordinary Life In The New Russia, Russia doesn't seem to have changed much at all since the Soviet Union dissolved. It comes across like a revamped and suddenly expensive restaurant whose new menu disguises familiar dishes while the kitchen staff has merely switched toques.

Old babushkas still stand in line in the snow, but now they are waiting not to buy, but to sell. *Blat* (influence), the crucial element under the Soviets that bought luxuries such as cars, large apartments and good medicine, has given way to money. And money, its value shifting like sand, is as hard to come by as the goods that previously were proffered as bribes. "Some Russians," says Randolph, "would ask an American to imagine waking one morning to find that a new automobile cost $10 million and a lifetime savings of $10,000 would not buy a pair of tennis shoes."

Sexual aids and erotica may be openly available, but little has altered with respect to birth control. It's still the woman's job. With the most available option being the old Soviet condom — so thick it's known as a "galosh" — it's no surprise to learn that abortion remains the most regular form of contraception. Even the new Russian woman can have eight or more. The new Russian man's attitude to sex is similarly distressing. Many, Randolph suggests, "often seemed to prefer a kind of sex that we would call abuse or perhaps even rape if it happened in Europe or America."

Igor Kon, a sexologist (at least that's new), blames the Soviet system, which turned men into obedient and docile beings at work who took their anger out on their women. "Either [the Russian male] must be a brute, be cruel, proving himself to be a tyrant, or he is nothing."

Randolph's small asides, too, are throwbacks to the Soviet era: truckers unfreezing their oil sumps with flaming rags; hailing an ambulance as a taxi; cigarette butts on a hospital floor; the hospital ceiling that fell into her lap; suffering from "the Moscow Blues" (winter depression). The new Russia is like the disclaimer at the front of novels: "Only the names have been changed."

"Democracy by 1995," Randolph writes, "became an unfriendly concept in Russia. It was a word that increasingly meant lack of control or even weakness brought on by muddlers from Washington or Tokyo or the Common Market . . . however, economists saw reasons to celebrate: Russia was establishing the foundations of a Western economy and elbowing its way into the international marketplace."

Socially, the Russians are responding with customary distrust and slowness to change. Who can blame them? They will get to their own version of democracy in their own fashion, at their own speed, probably paying terribly for change along the way, as Russians always have. A more hopeful sign for ex-Moscow observers comes in the story Randolph tells of the large bunch of particularly unusual tulips she buys, only to discover during a stroll that they've clearly been cut from the herbaceous border surrounding the local war monument. It could have happened any time since Genghis Khan. Russians make a great case for "nature not nurture" theorists.

By reporting directly from the people of Russia, Randolph has tallied with affection and potency the financial, physical and emotional impact of the struggle to set up a new nation for the second time in eight decades. Here the dry statistics of foreign op-ed analyses are fleshed out into real people.

Julia Watson was the Moscow correspondent for the London Daily Mail and the London Evening Standard from 1984-88.

Study at Chez Vous university

Online training services can turn a home or office into a virtual campus, says **Nicola Jones**

AT 68, Derek Dawson is happy to learn new tricks — as long as he doesn't have to go too far to learn them. Recently retired, he writes a column for a local weekly paper, which involves both word-processing skills and using a computer for research. He is not afraid of technology, and has a Multimedia PC with Internet connection, but he knows that he needs training.

"At my age I haven't the money or inclination to go to a company for training, but I could do with brushing up on my word-processing and Internet skills," Mr Dawson says.

Recently, he enrolled in an online word-processing training course and is getting to grips with tabs and indents from the comfort of his kitchen table. He does exercises, which he e-mails back to his assigned tutor, and shares experiences with other students using a chatline.

More and more initiatives by training providers in various countries are being designed to help computer users with an Internet connection take courses in a range of subjects. The Open University has been offering distance learning over the Internet for some time. Free local phone calls in the United States have encouraged a proliferation of courses offered over the Internet. While many courses have to be paid for, some are free of charge.

All Internet users — and there were an estimated 38 million by mid-1995 — must be able to navigate around a computer. Courses to teach these skills are offered in various places on the Internet. Peritas, one of the largest training companies in the UK, is working with Microsoft to deliver online training courses over the Internet via Microsoft's new education service, Microsoft Online Institute (MOLI). Launched in January, the courses have attracted students from all over the world.

The online service, which Peritas describes as a "virtual university campus", allows anyone to buy a self-paced learning course in a range of different software applications, including those in the Microsoft Office software suite. When students register they receive a pack of materials and are assigned a Microsoft certified trainer, who guides them via e-mail and checks on weekly assignments offered as part of the course. Students can participate twice a day in a live, online discussion with other enrolled students.

Paul Butler, director of Peritas Learning Technology, says: "A classroom environment is undoubtedly the best place to learn because it provides interaction between students and their tutor. However, traditional classroom-based training can be inflexible because it demands that students meet in one place at the same time. Distance learning is an alternative without the geographical and mobility barriers, yet it can provide positive interaction and a managed learning plan."

Even competent computer users need to keep up with software developments but often find they can't fit in a course that takes them away from their business. Roger Tovell, director of Now Media, has improved his computer graphics skills by following the Complete Training Course, which is offered online by my Macintosh training company, Face to Interface Ltd.

"I've been on several face-to-face training courses," says Mr Tovell, "and they are the ideal, but it's difficult to get out of the office. It's reassuring to know that there is someone who can answer my questions when I have a problem."

Some large companies are experimenting with courseware delivery across the Internet. John Newton, of NCR Education, emphasises that training course design is important. Learners need to have some control and flexibility to determine the pace and nature of their own learning, and this should be inherent in the design. For example, he envisages staff on a course to improve their customer skills doing interactive computer training before they attend a traditional session, thereby cutting down the face-to-face element of the course from three days to one.

The potential offered by the Internet for distance learning is still hampered by the technology: even with high-speed modems, it can take a long time to download instructions and exercises from the Internet, which is why Peritas tends to send its material by post. Until there is an improvement in communications technology for Internet services, this will continue to be a problem. Likewise, paying for courses will remain a thorny issue until security for credit card transactions over the Internet can be guaranteed.

Have modem, will not need to travel PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

In theory, anyone should be able to do a training course from anywhere, but poor telecommunications will continue to limit access in many parts of the world, as will the cost of computers and fast modems needed to access the Internet.

But the potential is enormous, especially now it is becoming possible to use the Internet for live audio broadcasts, with video conferencing as another emerging technology.

Training over the Internet is becoming so popular in the United States and Canada that a Web site called Gymnasia Virtuales offers online courses on how to design and deliver an online course! America Online, a subscription service, is home to a range of free courses, including "Home Fish Farming for Profit" and "Special Techniques in Cardiopulmonary Bypass". In the case of the latter, it might be prudent for budding surgeons to check out the author's credentials before putting the lessons into practice.

Nicola Jones is a freelance writer and director of Face to Interface Ltd

Web sites:
Face to Interface Ltd: http://www.demon.co.uk/facetointer/
Peritas: http://www.peritas.com
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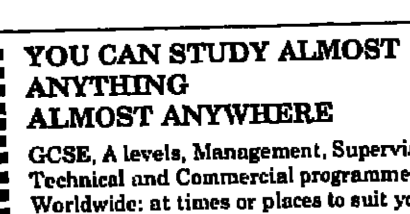
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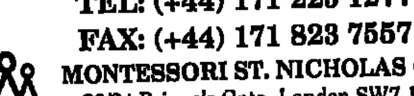
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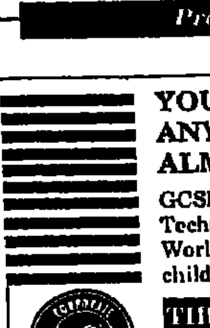
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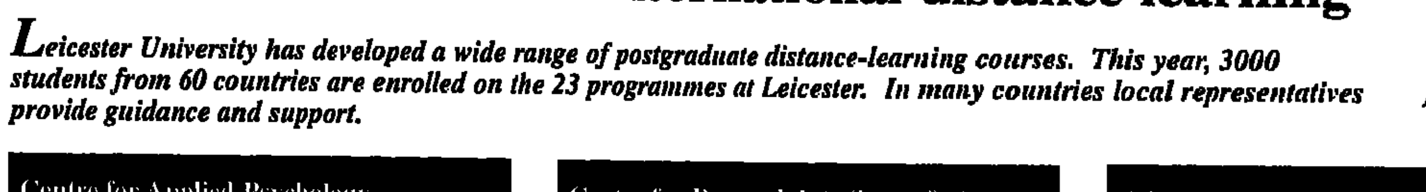
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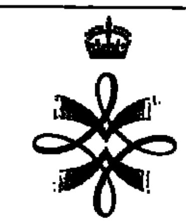






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For further information please contact: **EMDU, University of Leicester, The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton NN2 6AF, UK. Tel: +44 1604 30180. Fax: +44 1604 231136. e-mail: emdu@le.ac.uk.**
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and a dissertation.

Further details and application forms quoting ref: DL/GW796 from **The Continuing Professional Development Office, School of Education, 21 University Road, Leicester LE1 7RF, UK. Tel: +44 116 252 5782 (24 hrs). Fax: +44 116 252 3653. e-mail: hw8@le.ac.uk.**

For information about the University and all its courses contact: Emma Griffin, Higher Degrees Office, Leicester University, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH, UK. Fax: +44 116 252 2447.

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Job description: Overall responsibility for the co-ordination of all teaching aspects within the Faculty of Education; in-service education; liaison with Faculty staff, schools, Ministries of Education and other stakeholders on all aspects of teaching practice and in-service education, plus any related duties as assigned by the Dean of Education, including teaching duties.

DEPARTMENT:
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Lecturer

Requirements: At least an appropriate master's degree, with specialisation in Educational Management and/or Comparative Education, but preferably a doctorate. A proven record of university teaching, research, publication and community service coupled with experience in an African context would be an additional advantage.

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Non-Namibian citizens may be appointed for a 3- year, renewal contract period.

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(NON-RENEWABLE CONTRACT AFTER 2 YEARS)

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Closing date: 31 July 1996

Contact persons: Mr Jack Francis at 09-264-61-206-3099.

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Tel: 0121 359 0870 (24 hour answerphone); Fax: 0121 359 6470; Email: h.e.wilcox@aston.ac.uk Closing date: 16 August 1996.

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Email:personnel.mailbox@swansea.ac.uk
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SAC receives funding from the Scottish Office Agriculture Environment and Fisheries Department.

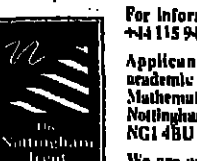
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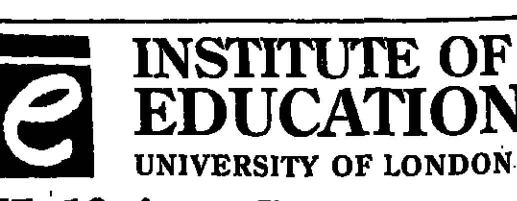
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For informal enquiries, contact Dr D Applebaum on +44 115 9418418 ext 2196 (e-mail: dba@maths.ntu.ac.uk).

Applicants should submit a full CV including two academic referees to Dr D Applebaum, Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research, The Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 4BU by 16 August 1996.

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Please quote ref: OS/OM/BRZ/PY/GW.
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Interviews will be held in Recife: 10/11 September 1996.

Oxfam UK and Ireland is a member of Oxfam International. Oxfam works with poor people in their struggle against hunger, diseases, exploitation and poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East through relief, development, research and public education.

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It covers the North-East Highlands, the Eastern Highlands of [illegible] and [illegible] in the South, and includes some very isolated areas which are extremely difficult to reach. So much of your success will depend on your ability to help [illegible] technical staff survey, analyse and report on the situation in their locality through direction, training and support. You will also need to work with our Emergency Preparedness & Response Manager on the provision of technical support and training to government and other agencies, locally and centrally.

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Will coordinate and supervise all WWF programme activities and Network interests in Central Africa and act as Coordinator of the WWF Central and West Africa Sub-regional Team (CWAST). Assists with fundraising,serves as a technical resource, provides leadership, and bears principal responsibility for the management of WWF's personnel, financial, and administrative systems in Central Africa.

Requirements: Advanced degree (Ph.D. or Masters) in conservation, natural sciences, management, international development or related field. Relevant work experience may substitute for advanced degree. Ten years professional experience in conservation, natural resource management, or International development and minimum of 3-5 years experience working in Africa.

Excellent leadership abilities, strong skills in programme planning, implementation and evaluation, and the management of human and financial resources required. Demonstrated ability to liaise effectively with local communities and governments, excellent oral and written communications skills in English and French essential.

Please forward cover letter and resume by mail to:
WWF-US, Human Resource Dept. 530M, 1250 24th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037 NO FAX OR TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES, PLEASE. AA/EOE

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COVER LETTER AND RESUME: JULY 19, 1996.

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Botswana	L Inorganic Chemistry	W45131
Botswana	L Physical Chemistry	W45132
Botswana	P/AP Primary Education	W45133
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Botswana	SL/L Applied Quantitative Analysis	W45139
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CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE

The 12th century chasse, which once held St Thomas à Becket's bones — PHOTOGRAPH: CHARLES MILLER

'Fiasco' as Becket casket sells for £3.8m

Dan Glaister

SAINT Thomas à Becket would have spun in his grave if he could have followed the chaos over the sale of his reliquary chest last week.

The Becket chasse, a 12th century enamel chest depicting the murder of Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, and which once held some of his bones, was sold at auction for £3.8 million, a week after it could have been bought for the Victoria & Albert museum for £1.8 million.

A London book dealer bidding for an anonymous buyer defeated the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which dropped out at £3.6 million.

The chasse does not qualify for an export block as it has been in the country for less than 50 years. But in a surprise move after the sale, the National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said that the auctioneer's export licence would be modified to exclude immediate export of the chasse — to allow time for "full reflection and consideration".

David Barrie, director of the National Art Collections Fund charity, said: "I'm delighted we've got another chance, but it's becoming the biggest fiasco since the Three Graces."

Lord Rothschild, chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "We made an aggressive bid but as a public institution we had to impose some discipline on ourselves."

The seller was the British Rail pension fund, which bought the chasse in 1979 for £500,000.

It is understood that the V&A and the NACF, together with the British Museum, where the chasse has been on show since 1979, tried to arrange a private sale, but were unable to raise the £1.8 million asking price.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

***IS THERE* any reason why so many African leaders have names beginning with M?**

THE current Internet Living Swahili dictionary database holds over 21,400 entries, of which 18 per cent begin with the letter M. The vast majority of these M words are nouns, the result of several convergent grammatical patterns. One predominant pattern is for animate nouns — words about people or creatures — to hold the M prefix (often Mu or Mw) in the singular. For example, a Taylor in Swahili would be called Mshonaji (*shona* is the verb to sew), while a cook would be Mpishi (*pika* means to cook). The M prefix also denotes a person's group or place of origin. So a Christopher could be named Mkristo and a Scot would be Mscotlandi. — *Martin Benjamin, Malagali, Tanzania*

THE most widespread language family in Africa is Niger-Congo, which has many hundreds of descendants today. Nouns are classified in classes, comparable to genders in Indo-European. These classes have reference to the real world and were marked by prefixes and/or suffixes. It is a fair hypothesis that the class referring to humans had M as a marker of a singular, human noun. For a modern example, we have in a number of languages *muntu* for person, *bantu* for people, in two separate but related classes. — *Neil Skinner, Madison, Wisconsin, USA*

***WILL I* be celebrating the end of the second millennium on my own on December 31, 2000?**

IF WE take into account the fact that in 1752 the month of September had 11 days missing, a more logical position would be to celebrate the end of the millennium on January 11, 2001. Personally I intend to celebrate on December 31, 1999, December 31, 2000 and January 11, 2001; and possibly even on January 11, 2000, just to be safe. — *Alan Craig, Shadforth, Durham*

SINCE a millennium is an imaginary unit of time — like all units of time except days, lunar months, and years — the questioner can celebrate the end whenever he likes. If he wishes to celebrate the end of the second Christian millennium, he should actually have celebrated last year, on December 31, 1995, since Christ was born in 6BC. —*Jane Carnall, Edinburgh*

***IS THERE* any currency which has a higher unit value than sterling? Which currency has the lowest unit value, and how many of them are there to the pound?**

THERE are many currencies with a higher unit value than the pound sterling: the dinar of Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Libya and Tunisia; the lira of Malta; the rial of Oman; the pound of Cyprus, Israel and Sudan — even the punt of Ireland. As for lowest unit value: according to today's Inter-bank rates £1 will buy you 117,136 Turkish lira — I know of no better deal if it is quantity you are after! — *Peter Gladman, Ramsgate, Kent*

GUARDIAN readers will recall that in 1985 Steve Bell's "If" offered up the little-known fact that the official currency of the Socialist Seabirds' Republic of Rockall, the turd, had a unit value 2.5 times that of the pound sterling. I understand that the turd has since declined in value due to the ubiquity of the standard on which it is based, but it still makes an attractive lump-sum deposit. — *Tim Adams, Noumea, New Caledonia*

Any answers?

***DO CRIMINALS* ever resemble their identikit pictures?** — *Gerard Mackay, Nesscliffe, Shropshire*

***WHERE* did the exclamation mark and question mark originate, and why are they practically universal irrespective of the widely differing scripts for various languages?** — *J Kelly, Falmouth, Cornwall*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

Letter from Japan Jane Norman

The Colonel's curse

IN CASE you didn't know, the late Colonel Sanders was the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken. In Japan a lifesize clay model of the Colonel, portly and benign in a white suit, stands at the door of Kentucky Fried Chicken shops, welcoming customers with arms outstretched in a gesture of Southern hospitality. Colonel Sanders only discovered his potential in the autumn of his life. As the embodiment of the American dream who did not make his first million till he was in his 70s, he is an inspiration to many a Japanese entrepreneur.

Baseball is another American phenomenon which has flourished in Japan. The Hanshin Tigers, sponsored by a private railway, is a team with strong local support in the Kobe-Osaka area. The Tigers' popularity has done them little good on the field, however. Not once in living memory had they won the league. Until, that is, one miraculous summer some years ago when a batter brought over from America for the season turned the Tigers' fortunes around.

Twice the size of most of his team-mates, the American batter caught the imagination of the Japanese nation. He appeared in advertisements for all sorts of commodities from training shoes to instant noodles. His exploits on imaginary fields became the subject of a strip cartoon. Even those who normally took little interest in baseball tuned in to the matches to watch the Tigers' batter hit the ball clean out of the stadium.

The Hanshin Tigers won the championship. Never had the streets of Osaka witnessed such scenes of jubilation. Beer flowed in the gutters. Grown men wept. "I've waited 50 years for this," sniffled one tottering fan.

The Kentucky Fried Chicken shop in the city centre showed it was on the right side by dressing Colonel Sanders in a Tigers' strip and a Tigers' hat and scarf. This was too much for the rampaging fans of the victorious team. In an excess of high spirits they lifted the Colonel on to their shoulders, carried him triumphantly to the banks of the river and heaved him in. The noise of the splash was drowned by the cheering. Fans exchanged high fives and jumped in after him. Kentucky Fried Chicken took the kidnapping of the Colonel in good part and made the most of the publicity.

The following year, despite the presence of the American batter, the Tigers reverted to their old form. The batter seemed to have other things on his mind and played with half the panache of the previous summer. Fans were disappointed. The year after that he went back to America and the Tigers did not win a match. Fans were in despair.

At this point somebody remembered Colonel Sanders at the bottom of the river. Could the Tigers' poor performance be Colonel Sanders' revenge? As a representative of the United States to which they owed so much, Colonel Sanders should perhaps not have been treated so unceremoniously.

The river was dredged for the Colonel's body. He was brought to the bank in a sorry state. His spruce white suit was thick with algae. He had only one leg. Both arms were broken off at the shoulders like the Venus de Milo. There were sinister holes where his eyes had been. The fans gazed hopelessly at the wreck.

PERHAPS the Colonel might be appeased if he were incarnated in a new model, they thought. A brand new Colonel Sanders, made in America, was shipped to Japan at the fans' expense and delivered to a Shinto shrine in central Osaka. Before an assembly of the Tigers' faithful the priest performed a ceremony to exorcise the Colonel's curse. The Colonel, now harmless, was borne aloft along the river bank where the procession halted to make a ritual apology. The staff of Kentucky Fried Chicken were lined up to welcome the Colonel home. The fans set him down as though he were made of glass and prayed that the exorcism would do the trick.

So did the Hanshin Tigers go on to win the league once more? Unfortunately the rehabilitation of Colonel Sanders had no bearing whatsoever on the team's performance. Fans have to content themselves with the memory of that one glorious season.

A Country Diary

Phil Gates

RIVER WEAR, Wolsingham: The pink flower spikes of butterbur have withered and given way to leaves of rhubarb proportions. This forest of waist-high foliage makes a perfect riverbank hide, so we sink into its shade and wait to see what turns up. A sandpiper arrives within minutes, skimming low over the water on stiff wingbeats and settling amongst the small pools left by the retreating river on the far bank. Next, a pair of long-tailed tits work their way through the birches overhead, hanging from the tips of the branches, searching for caterpillars. But they don't hold our attention for long.

A family of goosanders is drifting around the bend in the river; eleven brown and buff ducklings working their way between the wet boulders in the shallows, where darting shoals of minnows provide perfect nursery training for goosander fishing skills. They are only metres away when the duck spots us. Pandemonium! Frantic alarm calls as she stampedes her brood to the far side of the river, paddle-steaming across the surface on their stumpy, featherless wings. One by one they shoot the rapids like bobbing corks, regrouping around their mother and paddling out of sight.

A drowsy stillness descends in the mid-morning heat. The only movement comes from a large brown moth, darting amongst the red campion flowers. When it settles for a few seconds it turns out to be a silver Y, here at least two months ahead of schedule. Over the last few days, a massive early influx of continental painted-lady butterflies has swept into Weardale with the warm weather, offering the unprecedented spectacle of spring-flying orange tips and these autumn immigrants feeding side by side.

A concise survey of Lucian Freud's paintings comes as a relief after a show that highlights the emptiness of Francis Bacon's later years, writes **Adrian Searle**

Grand masters

THERE is a myth that as artists get older they get better. Having developed their signature style and their vision of the world, the greatest artists are supposed to go on to transcend even that. In old age — if they live that long — they are expected to make works in a late style which, as much as it consummates their lifetime's endeavours, breaks its forms, going beyond what we have come to regard as the artist's personality.

But what was true of Titian is more often a pretty concept, founded in our own fears of mortality, our looming decline. There is such a thing as failure and disappointment, though it is something we don't like to think about. The art market doesn't like it much either, but that is another matter.

The Francis Bacon retrospective at the Pompidou Centre in Paris until October 14, is but the latest and the largest to be held since the artist's retrospective Tate show in 1985. One feels, once more, the power and surprise of Bacon's work drain away as one moves through the exhibition. As well as becoming exhausted ourselves, we feel Bacon's own depletion.

There is a limit to how much confrontation, how much hysteria and "brutality of fact" one can take. Bacon's work palls by repetition, and by the insistence of his degraded, isolated, tormented view of humanity, which anyway may not have been as deeply felt as the Bacon myth demands.

Given the artist's severely limited range of subjects, the unvarying size of his paintings, and the instantly recognisable manner in which he painted, an exhibition of getting on for 100 Bacons is more than enough.

Those lumps of chewed pink stuff flopping about on their mattresses or isolated on their office chairs; those squirming figures in their anonymous, frigid interiors, straining on their toilets, gagging as they lean over their designer basins; those livid, nominally human eruptions rearing up from expanses of dead carpet, or shadowed against lilac walls, grow more inert and less and less convincing as time goes on.

The rotating faces, always deformed by the same blisters of paint, the same blots, blobs and fleshy, arcing swerves and smears, the same vectors, the same imploding, inward collapse of the head, the same ruined physiognomies become rote and cartoon-like. The daft arrows that point at nothing, the scrappy litter of Letraset, the pastel rubbed into the oil paint, the same rooms with their interior design done by Rothko and Newman, and the sweet, cloying, chemical colour, the thrown paint and the glazed, grand-manner triptych format cannot disguise the essential emptiness of Bacon's later work.

But some of them I love. The sketched-in cars speeding down the highway and the palm tree in the distance behind the panting dog in a painting from 1952. The Man In Blue, one of Bacon's businessmen who looks like Ronald Reagan, painted in 1954. The naked man disappearing between a translucent curtain into absolute blackness in Bacon's 1949 Study From The Human Body. The portraits of Isabel Rawsthorne done in 1965, and the black-on-black curtains behind a huge man dwarfed in darkness, in a 1951 study of the nude. At his best, Bacon was marvellous, witty and inventive, but forget all the Grand Guignol and the heavy, asphyxiated breathing, the tired clichés of humanity in extremis.

The later Bacon is what Bacon professed to hate: illustration. The work becomes suave, mannered, and rather silly. It seems to undo, rather than transcend the work, which arrived, almost fully formed, in the late 1940s. Bacon got better and better at less and less as he aged, and, like most painters, his work is served by a more limited kind of confrontation.

At his worst, Bacon is meretricious, repetitive and self-regarding, a boorish parody of himself and of the world he created. Some of his work, finally, is plain daft: the ambulatory arse-on-a-plinth, its legs encased in a cricket pad and an angler's wader, or the scary monsters from Aeschylus's Oresteia, the raw chicken swinging from the space-frame, flobbing goo into the room, and the ignominious stilted replay, in 1988, of his haunting Studies For Figures At The Base Of A Crucifixion, painted in 1944. Why, one wonders, did he bother?

WHILE Bacon dramatised his encounter with the limits of his own imagination and ended up, pretty much, going through the motions, Lucian Freud still seems to be developing, struggling with the material world of things, and with his apprehension of the living person in front of him when he paints.

After the elephantine Bacon show, a concise survey of 40 of Freud's works comes as a relief. Seen en masse, Freud's paintings have often bored me, yet in the small rooms of the Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal, until September 8, they slow down the act of looking and impress one with their concentration.

The show ranges from a painting of a box of apples, done in 1939, to his most recently completed paintings and etchings. Freud's work has developed from a wonderfully endearing, faux-naïf, stilted figuration — a self-portrait as a wan young man with big ears, holding a feather, a sick youth in a hospital bed, his face contorted in a bleary, warped delirium — to that of a painter who is often accused of seeing human beings only as flesh. But Freud — unlike Bacon — does not, largely, delude himself with the fantasy that he can paint more than appearances. In his paintings one finds an increasing hesitation, doubt and difficulty, perhaps even a growing humility towards his subjects and what he apprehends of them.



Bacon's Portrait Of George Dyer Riding A Bicycle (1966)



Lucian Freud's Pluto And The Bateman Sisters (1996)

There are those who see something deeply unpleasant in Freud's work: the way in which the paint is pawed about, slathered around the forms, or coagulated into little crusty patches, the way the brush — often a very small brush, even where he is painting the massive, sagging bulk of Big Sue on a large scale — pokes and mauls and dithers and slides over the form. Sue, the claimant's officer who made her first appearance at Freud's Whitechapel retrospective in 1993, has come to occupy the iconic place previously taken by Leigh Bowery.

Renoir, notoriously, said he painted with his prick, and there is a way we might imagine Freud painting with his fingertips, lingering here and there, rubbing, mauling, dabbling about on his subject's sallow skin. But a painting is a painting, not a person, and the painter is making a painting, whatever else he does.

Freud's paintings evince a kind of anxiety about the body, about where, exactly, it is in relation to him. Freud has a certain difficulty in negotiating the edge of forms, where they begin and end; he finds it difficult to get the brush to follow around a contour as it disappears from sight, to give his sitters actual volume; it seems he can't or won't paint what he cannot see. But in the act of painting, he at once loses and refinds his models, and himself. He paints their interminable patience, and perhaps, too, his own boredom as he works away, beginning with the detail, working up to the whole. But painting everything he sees is, of course, impossible.

As Freud's career has progressed, the paint has become more opaque, accounting more for the light in the room and how it falls on bodies, on foreheads, on the floor and the tattered chair, than on any supposed luminosity of inner character. He does not mistake the one for the other. Freud's encounters — perceptually and psychologically — are with surfaces, even when he is painting his closest friends, his lovers, his daughters, or even his grandchild at her mother's breast.

We are all Freudians now, and it is difficult not to wish to go beyond the skin, to locate the inner life both of the paintings, his subjects, and of the painter himself. Bacon gives us a frisson of some kind of psychodrama, but one which turns out to be a fake.

FREUD, on the other hand, does not try to trick the viewer into believing we can see below the surface. He leaves us with the lesson that others are finally unknowable, however much their presence acts upon us. The viewpoints of his paintings — the artist's eye (and our own) seeming to hover omnipotently above his dressed and undressed models, who are often cruelly top-lit, or cropped by the edges of the canvas — return us to ourselves, to our own gaze, while his subjects remain oblivious or indifferent to it.

Freud's subjects suffer us to come close, while maintaining their own mental space, their distance. The eye of the viewer meanwhile goes on searching, rampaging, wanting to delve and to form a living relationship with what it sees, what it wants but can never have. This is both the pleasure and the shock of Freud's work, and finally what it describes, making it unsettling in a way that Bacon rarely achieved.

Woman of the House

Michael Billington profiles the new head of Covent Garden

GENISTA McINTOSH, executive director of the Royal National Theatre, has been appointed, at the age of 49, to take on the toughest job in British artistic life: running the Royal Opera House. She will succeed Jeremy Isaacs who retires in July 1997. She will have to supervise the two-year redevelopment of the building, oversee the opera and ballet companies during the nomadic years, ensure that Covent Garden re-opens on schedule in late 1999 and, not least, be responsible for a massive fund-raising programme. As she said, "I feel a bit stunned as well as thrilled to have got the job. But this is where the sober thinking has to begin."

Everyone who has worked with her pays glowing testament to her abilities. Richard Eyre, who as director of the National Theatre has worked with her since 1990, says: "I'm pleased for the Royal Opera House and sad for myself. I wouldn't have been able to direct a third of the plays I have done without her as a partner. She's been an indispensable part of the equation." Terry Hands, for whom she worked as both casting director and planning controller at the Royal Shakespeare Company, concurs: "She's intelligent, well organised, considerate and has never tried to be a man in a man's world. She's not in that terrible post-Thatcherite line of handbag-muggers."

Jenny McIntosh (as she is better known) was born in the Hertfordshire village of Little Gaddesden to parents who gave her a good grounding in the arts. "I remember being taken to The Magic Flute when I was a child so that Papageno and Papagena became fixed in my imagination. I was also taken when I was seven or eight to see Les Sylphides and went on to see all the other classical ballets," she says.

"I've always believed it's vitally important to take young people to plays, opera, ballet, even if they are sometimes beyond their comprehension. In my teens, I might have preferred the Beatles, but what you see as a child takes root in your imagination and re-emerges later."

The key to Jenny McIntosh lies in her old-fashioned belief in the idea of public service. She has always been keenly involved in politics (Harriet Harman and Paul Boateng are among her friends), sits on endless committees and chairs the South London branch of an organisation called Common Purpose, devoted to bringing together people from all walks of life to inform them of how society actually works.

She is well aware that tough times lie ahead. But she brings to her new job a love of opera and ballet, a fine track record as an administrator but, above all, a conviction that the arts are not just a pleasurable decoration on life but a force for social cohesion. In fact, not for the élite but part of the Common Purpose.

The fantastical sound of music

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

JEFFREY BERNARD, that writer of beautiful suicide notes, was once the Spectator's TV critic. He lost the job on the nit-picketty grounds that he never watched any television because he was always drunk. (Incidentally, he dismissed his own programme, **Jeffrey Bernard: Reach for the Ground** on Channel 4, as disappointing, so that'll do for me.)

Watching a TV programme is an absurd interruption to your flow, a hippo in your Limpopo. Richard Ingrams, who had no TV set at the time, once wrote a very readable column on the TV he could hear through a hotel wall. No, it is my opinion that Jeffrey Bernard probably did watch TV but assumed it was delirium tremens.

That is understandable. Take Jeremy Beadle. Come back here at once. Sit down.

I recommend the new series of **Beadle's About** (LWT) on the grounds that it offers all the effects of alcohol without the cirrhosis.

Janet Elford must have considered herself a lucky woman. She had five children, a four square husband, a farm in Dorset and her rendition of I Believe in a Swanage panto had been warmly received. Peggy Archer would have felt a stab of jealousy. Then Beadle came coiling down her apple tree.

Arriving home from the panto at midnight, Janet found a smoking meteorite embedded in her lawn. The place was swathed with yellow tape saying Explosive Hazard and seethed with police, firemen, a TV crew and men from the Ministry of Defence taking radiation readings. Mulder and Scully were probably on their way.

A shaggy sort of chap, who claimed to be an amateur ley line detective and full time Druid, said he had been cogitating up at the stone circle — he gestured vaguely in the wrong direction — when he saw the meteorite land. They were, he said, on a ley line which ran from Nairn in Scotland to Cognac in France ("In fact some people believe that's why they put the stars on the brandy.")

Janet, a calm, good-looking woman, clutched her Tesco shopping bag and listened with admirable courtesy. (I suppose you get used to this sort of thing in Dorset.)

The Druid said he thought she had attracted the meteorite. Was she at all musical? Well, yes, actually she'd just been singing I Believe in panto. Would she sing it now? She laughed. He begged. So she sang. It was a small, sweet, true soprano and the Druid blew his nose emotionally.

As if at a signal, a small alien of the classical variety known as a Gray rose from the meteorite. It was naked like a skinned rabbit and it whimpered like a child.

Janet's hand was clapped across her mouth. The Druid said: "I think this does require a certain amount of strength on your part." She began to talk to the little thing gently and with increasing kindliness.

"What do you want . . . how many are you . . . what are you doing here . . . do you want a cup of tea . . . do you understand me . . . please, talk to me . . . can you nod?"

The studio audience were shrieking with laughter.

"I have been singing tonight . . . did you like my singing . . . do you want me to sing again?" It nodded and she sang: "I believe for everyone that goes astray someone will come to show the way . . ." The alien hummed along. "You sing very well," said Janet encouragingly.

She sang: "The King of Love my shepherd is whose goodness faileth never. I nothing lack if I am His and He is mine forever."

"Mummy!" the thing cried. "Mummy!"

At this point Beadle appeared with four arms and a head like a peanut. Janet's shock and distress were palpable: "Please, what is this? What's going on, please?"

This woman is a heroine. Lions, as Wodehouse said, could take her correspondence course. They should dedicate a stained glass window to her in the parish church, clutching her Tesco bag, singing to comfort a lost alien. There could be a rat with whiskers in the bottom corner.

"A dastardly creature whose name I will not reveal to you." Sister Wendy, failing to forgive the restorer of The Book of Kells. Her charming new series, Sister Wendy's Story of Painting (BBC1), was ludicrously placed at 4.15pm on Sunday, competing with Bugs Bunny All-American Hero. Shift that sister.

Mission passable

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

IF IT wasn't for the fact that Tom Cruise engaged Brian De Palma to direct **Mission: Impossible**, the whole thing would almost certainly have been a bit of a bore.

There are only two characters in the movie who are in the least bit interesting, and neither one of them is Tom Cruise. The plot is so complicated that I gave up around halfway.

De Palma, however, has clearly decided that he's going to have to show us a thing or two and provides at least three sequences which only a first-class film-maker could have accomplished.

Two of them are especially good, in the manner of his Hitchcockian best. The first has Cruise's Ethan Hunt breaking into the CIA's multi-guarded headquarters and, while suspended in mid-air by a wire harness, extricating the computer disc that will solve the US government's major problem. It's all done in total silence, with the nail-biting climax provided by just a droplet of sweat from Hunt's brow.

In the second classy sequence he has his tongue firmly in his cheek, traversing a train-top battle we've seen dozens of times before with furious abandon. No matter that it's totally illogical and completely fantastical. Just watch the orchestration of the camerawork and editing. Buster Keaton would have loved it.

But what of the rest? Well, the two characters who do intrigue a little are Jon Voight as obstinate Jim Phelps and Vanessa Redgrave's Max, roughly the kind of villainess Lotte Lenya played in Doctor No.

Voight pops up in a film like this every other year or so and somehow persuades us to treat his character with a modicum of respect, while Redgrave gives Cruise the most thorough acting lesson in their one extended scene together.

Otherwise this is a sort of steady-as-you-go performance, serviceable but oddly characterless, and more reliant on his newly exercised biceps than his dreamboat-with-a-nice arse image. I totally agree with Variety who said that the muscles should have got separate billing.

But what can he do? There is no wit in the movie, except in its direction, precious little romance — poor Emmanuelle Béart is reduced to looking sulkily succulent — and, above all, there is no real passion.

Unfortunately, for all De Palma's brilliant pyrotechnics Mission: Impossible goes in one eye and out of the other. Your mission, folks, should you choose to accept it, is to pay your money, munch yourself silly and forget about the whole thing as soon as you've enjoyed it.

The last time I saw Walter Hill, he was sitting with his wife at the Excelsior Hotel, Venice, sipping cappuccinos. "You don't want to speak to me," he said when I hailed him, "I'm just a director who sold out." Admittedly, he hasn't made many films like the first 48 Hours and Southern Comfort in recent years, but **Wild Bill**, which the National Film Theatre has rescued from seeming oblivion, shows that he hasn't sold out entirely. It's a summation of the life and times of gunman Wild Bill Hickok that's far from perfect but contains the kind of imaginative touches that, in both The Long Riders and Geronimo, spoke of a man following in some distinguished Western footsteps.

The film casts the excellent Jeff Bridges as Hickok, a tearaway Ellen Barkin as Calamity Jane and narrator John Hurt as Wild Bill's English friend. The format is deliberately episodic, intending gradually to build up a portrait of the man as half-hero, half-monster.

The film could never be popular these days when people want a story from A to Z and no mucking about, but it is distinguished by the extraordinary production design of Joseph Nemec III, the glowing camera work from Lloyd Ahern, the whole-hearted acting and the romantic feeling Hill brings to his exposition.

This is myth often made to look astoundingly real, but cut up into little pieces like a cinematic jigsaw puzzle. It is almost as if Hill asks watchers to piece it together for themselves, though his own view of Hickok, as a man of his rough and tough times beginning to realise that it's all gone wrong somewhere, is perfectly clear.



High flyer . . . Tom Cruise as Ethan Hunt breaking into the CIA's headquarters in Brian De Palma's passionless Mission: Impossible

It's a very American parable — violence leading to the death of romance. This is the mythic West as Hill sees it — a combination of grit, dirt, blood and broken hopes.

There's absolutely nothing in Jim Jarmusch's louche and lengthy **Dead Man** to compare with the emotions that beaver away underneath Wild Bill. But pretension there certainly is. This has Johnny Depp as William Blake, an accountant who travels West from Cleveland, shrinking from the roughnecks on the train, on the promise of a job in a town called Machine.

When he arrives, the job's gone and he ends up wandering the wilderness, chased by hired guns and succoured by an Indian outcast called Nobody (Gary Farmer).

There's Robert Mitchum as the man who promised him work and then vows to kill him after Blake has shot his son in self-protection. There is John Hurt again, Gabriel Byrne and even Iggy Pop as a transvestite.

Robby Muller's superb black and white camerawork often saves the situation, in which Jarmusch casts Blake as a kind of wandering lost soul and the West as the loneliest, most God-forsaken place on earth, full of psychotics, cannibals, racists and plunderers. Only Nobody has any faith, and in the end prepares Blake for "the great journey" (death) with infinite care.

Ultimately, though, Nobody's nickname with his tribe, which is Talking Loud Saying Nothing, is appropriate to Jarmusch himself.

Tall tales of a manic gnome

THEATRE
Michael Billington

KEN CAMPBELL is the Ancient Mariner of British theatre. He may not have the long grey beard of Coleridge's original but he certainly has the "glittering eye" and the ability to spin a great tale. But where the poetic fabulist left his hearer a sadder and a wiser man, Campbell leaves his audience both happier and weak with laughter.

In his solo show Theatre Stories at London's Royal Court, he focuses on his life in theatre.

Best of all is his account of an elaborate hoax whereby, after the RSC's success with Nicholas Nickleby, he sent out letters to the great and good, purportedly from Trevor Nunn, announcing that it would in future become the Royal Dickens Company. Like all the great hoaxes, it had both a prankish malice and just enough plausibility to hoodwink the gullible.

But Ken Campbell also has the ability to summon up lost worlds. His account of playing the third act detective-inspector in sixties rep thrillers evokes an era of vanished tat.

Even funnier is his account of playing Angus in a Method-production of Macbeth and amazing the director by his researches and conclusion that the character was "a smelly dwarf" rudely ignored by the surrounding thanes.

But Campbell is just as good when he strays outside the theatre and describes his experiences in transcendental meditation. He tells how he was given his mantra — which he at first assumed was his mat — and became so obsessed with it that he repeated the magic word, *bonga*, all the way to and right through an interview with Giles Havergal at the Palace Theatre, Watford.

But Campbell gives up on the deeply caring TM coves when he realises they are incompatible with his secret ambition. "The last thing a great writer needs," he cannily tells us, "is the company of nice people."

The hysterical first half had people crying into their interval drinks. The second half, with its account of the formation of the Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool, is weirder if marginally less funny; though one particular unprintable story, involving an endorsement of the company for grant-getting purposes by our own Martin Walker, is a wonderful illustration of the gullibility of fund-giving bodies.

Campbell holds the stage for 2½ hours and proves you can make great theatre out of tall tales.

It helps that, with his hairless dome, extravagant eyebrows and accosting snicker, he looks like a manic Ilford gnome. But it is significant that his main props are a phallic Eastern statue on one side and a Ken Dodd icon on the other. His act has both an anarchic rudeness and something of the other Ken's surreal wildness.

This show proves Campbell is a superb monologuist and at the end you emerge, in the manner of Coleridge's wedding-guest "like one that hath been stunned".

Thrillers

Chris Petit

OffSide, by Manuel Vazquez Montalban (Serpent's Tail, £8.99)

BARCELONA'S most rumpled and civilised detective, the diverting Pepe Carvalho, takes another atmospheric excursion, moving smoothly between social strata as the city limbers up for the Olympics. Montalban's eye is that of a promiscuous *flâneur*, his story an afterthought — Barcelona FC's new British centre-forward is receiving fancily penned death threats — its outcome of less concern than the detours on offer. Montalban pronounces on everything from culinary history to paella, the Arabisation of city crime, and abstruse soccer tactics (3R + 3A + M = 6ARM; quite). A rich Catalan stew, shot through with alcoholic surrealism.

Kara's Game, by Gordon Stevens (HarperCollins, £14.99)

SAS man Finn is rescued in a Bosnian minefield by brave refugee Kara, in this earnest blockbuster strong on moral outrage and field research. Finn gives her a lesson in political reality: nobody'll bail out Bosnia. So Kara turns international terrorist, with Finn her apparent nemesis. Stevens's sympathy is for the players regardless of sides — the real villains in his book are the politicians. Anger at their indifference comes over as more real than the tenuous narrative, which overplays coincidence.

Hide and Seek, by James Patterson (HarperCollins, £12.99)

PATTERSON'S chunky reputation eludes me. To go by this scratchy outing, the author, who doubles as US chairman of J Walter Thompson, produces scrappy, sub-Stephen King material with silly English interludes that have Brits eating scrambled eggs with mashed potato. His housewife heroine turned singing superstar boasts a laughably dumb/cute line in breathless interior narrative: "I could never have imagined being *where I am right now*, in prison in New York." This, thanks to an unfortunate habit of killing or nearly offing husbands — one a psychopathic former striker for Liverpool FC. Tosherama. Come back Sidney Sheldon, all is forgiven.

Hoffman's Hunger, by Leon de Winter (André Deutsch, £15.99)

GLOOMY Hoffman eats up all his Spinoza between fashionable bulimia binges and suffers an existential crisis while ruminating on the pointlessness of Dutch diplomatic life in Prague (quite) and his failures as husband and father, sexless marriage, dead daughter. Intelligent but unthrilling.

Poppies in Pandora's box

Will Self

Opium: A History
by Martin Booth
Simon & Schuster 381pp £17.99

OPIUM, according to Martin Booth, is "evil"; it possesses "a throne" from which it can be displaced (by heroin); and it apparently "orchestrated British expansion into China". Not bad for a plant extract, one might say.

Booth's text is peppered with personifications of this type: it also mentions, mostly with approval, Nixon's "War on Drugs" — a phrase which never fails to conjure up in my mind the vision of someone stamping on a packet of drugs and screaming, "Take that, you scum!" Yet personification of drugs is not the sole preserve of those disposed against them. Wasn't it De Quincey, the godfather of the modern druggie, who described opium as "just, subtle and mighty"?

Some might argue that all this is "merely" a question of semantics. But meanings, in discussions of intoxication, ought to take centre stage.

It is also true that certain drugs, when mixed with certain minds and placed in certain situations, can produce quite appalling results. And it is to Booth's credit that — despite his failure to grasp the full ramifications of this simple fact — he has none the less provided the evidence for his readers to do so.

The opium poppy *(Papaver somniferum)* was first classified by Linnaeus in 1753, but its narcotic alkaloids had been widely used for many millennia before that. There is evidence of the ritual use of opium in neolithic tombs; opium was found in an Egyptian tomb dating from the 15th century BC; in the Therapeutic Papyrus of Thebes, dated 1552 BC, a paregoric of opium is recommended to soothe fractious children.

The substance Homer calls "nepenthe" was almost certainly opium, and so, perhaps, was the "soma" of the Hindu Vedas.

It was Paracelsus, in the 16th century, who first crystallised and defined the use of opium in medical contexts. He was also responsible for the coinage "laudanum", which he applied to opium pills. Thomas Sydenham, in the 1660s, first dissolved opium in alcohol: the form in which it was most commonly used right up until this century.

Sydenham wrote that "Medicine would be a cripple without [opium]; and whosoever understand it well, will do more with it alone than he could well hope to do from any single medicine". This kind of laudatory remark (a suitable term since "laudanum" derives from the Latin *laudere* — to praise), is common in the history of opium. But, alongside the medical employment of opium as a panacea and anaesthetic, came its use for recreational purposes, and with it the threat of physical habituation.

Booth never really gets to grips with the true nature of physical habituation to opiates: he sees addiction itself as fatal — a medical nonsense. This is a shame, since in many other respects this is an exemplary history. He carefully surveys the widespread use of opium in 19th century Britain, and nails down the reasons for the comparative ease with which the general populace were weaned from it (changing patterns of drug use, and the invention of other, cheaper analgesics such as aspirin). He gives a detailed and convincing explanation for the expansion of the opium trade from British India to China, and carefully unmasks the true villains of the piece: the trading houses such as Jardine Matheson, which rose on the back of the opium trade to become the great *hongs* of Hong Kong.

Booth also reveals the ironic realities underlying the synthesis from opium of the "wonder drugs" morphine and heroin. Both were initially regarded as possible cures for opium addiction; both turned out to be far more addictive.

Booth is fair-minded about the history of prohibition. He also plumbs the moral depths of the CIA's involvement in the heroin trade, aiding and abetting trafficking for dubious foreign policy ends.

But the Pandora's Box of opiate prohibition and interdiction policies will disgorge far more, in the way of nightmares, than the beautiful dreams and visions that the drug itself may provoke.

A *clochard* in Paris, photographed by Kertész in 1926

A too human photographer

THOUGH André Kertész's photographs of Paris in the twenties and thirties are now legendary, the way he tells his own story is as one of great misunderstanding *writes Gaby Wood*. In 1939, he was in New York, on the brink of the war that was to prevent his return to France. He took some photographs to an American publisher. "You are too human, Kertész," was the response, "make it brutal." He had always been, by his own admission, "a sentimentalist". Born in Hungary in 1894, Kertész wanted to do with a camera what he had seen drawings do in magazines. His first camera became for him "a little notebook, a sketchbook". He photographed his neighbours, his barren native countryside; he took his camera to the trenches. When he arrived in Paris in 1925 he spent his days in a café in Montparnasse and "only went home to sleep". His photographs (accompanied by his own words) in Kertész On Kertész (Abbeville, £25) present the inhabitants of pre-war Paris as if they were all a single family in an album — Chagall with his wife, happy and mad; Mondrian in his anal apartment; Colette with her cat; Alexander Calder playing with his toys; tramps, nightclub dancers, flappers and gentlemen. He heard others say his photos seemed "to come more out of a dream than out of reality".

Reality, though, was something Kertész knew how to mould. When miserable in New York he invented titles to fit: "Lost Cloud", "Melancholic Tulip". Towards the end of his life he told an interviewer: "I am always saying that the best photographs are those I never took."

Sensibility on a grand tour

TRAVEL BOOKS
Veronica Horwell

ANATOMY Of Restlessness is the very last of Bruce Chatwin: 205 pages, of which 12 are his bibliography (the list complete to a 1978 piece in the Radio Times) and 10 a letter on nomads he sent to publisher Tom Maschler, which later became The Songlines. Chatwin is selling us people: the patrician wanderer Wilfred Thesiger; John Pawson, the austere architect who scoured Chatwin's bedsitter; though the big pitch is for Chatwin himself. This is Chatwin the blond flirt in the Jane Bown photograph, tossing his boots by their laces over his shoulder and looking back, using travel as a come-on. Do you want me? Or do you want to be me? When he does switch off the magnetism, a sense of place shines through brilliantly: ". . . gardeners sluicing water from leather skins, lovingly, on rows of blue-green onions." That's Timbuktu for Vogue, of course.

You might assume this to be British behaviour — that we lost an empire and gained The Travellers' Bookshop, but consider Flaubert In Egypt, with Gustave up the Nile in 1849, wickedly subtitled by its editor Francis Steegmuller "a sensibility on tour". It's all present already, right down to the textile descriptions like a juiced-up World of Interiors — "light-coloured robes hang loose in the hot wind"; the proprietorship of the right kind of recherché information — "the clicking sound made by tarantulas" — and the bisexual curiosity. Flaubert is, very frankly, a sex tourist with the sensibility of his times — he has a little ecstasy about squashing bedbugs on the mud walls of his whore's house and coolly diagnoses her "one upper incisor, right, which is beginning to go bad".

Peter Levi calls his A Bottle In The Shade a "small and necessarily elderly adventure" through the Western Peloponnese. It reads quietly — though the poetry is always warm as brick walls at sundown — but it is like life. He loves what is for itself alone — the beautiful pink stripes of the electricity cooling towers which have been an Arcadian landmark nearly 30 years; he layers memory and present, staying at Patrick Leigh Fermor's house (they serve "Byzantine-coloured mashed potatoes . . . like the green-yellow face of a martyr") and looking up the mountain to where the ashes of Chatwin the fabulist rest in a small monastery in the middle of nowhere.

Women call a failure a failure and not an odyssey, and so are much better company on the road. After Desert Places, you might say of Robyn Davidson that since the splat of human shit frets her, she should perhaps not have journeyed with Rajasthan's Rabari nomads — even left India off the itinerary. But her honesty invigorates. She isn't pitching for nomadism, she just has temporary membership of a tribe from which she can always slope off for a shower in a dak bungalow.

Chatwin wrote "What am *I* doing here?"; Davidson says "What am I *doing* here?", unconfident that travel-writing gives her any right to intrude — when she's gnawed by bed bugs there is no Flaubertian self-congratulation. And then she describes one of those attacks of simple happiness for which you travel: "For the first time in your life you see them . . . you reach . . . to within 10 yards before they float off, lifting up in a blaze of flamingo red. It's not the same as seeing them in a zoo." Don't you dare stop writing, Davidson.

Anatomy of Restlessness, by Bruce Chatwin, Jonathan Cape, £15.99; Flaubert in Egypt, by Gustave Flaubert, Penguin, £6.99; A Bottle in the Shade, by Peter Levi, Sinclair-Stevenson, £17.99; Desert Places, by Robyn Davidson, Viking, £18

King of comedy

Philip French

Buster Keaton: Cut to the Chase
by Marion Meade
Bloomsbury 440pp £20

THE career of Buster Keaton is a perfect illustration of Scott Fitzgerald's claim that there are no second acts in American lives. Everything for which he is known was achieved before he was 35. Fortunately, and unlike Fitzgerald, the alcoholic wilderness years that followed the brief period of high good fortune, ended in the restoration of his reputation and his recognition as one of the greatest artists of the century. A few months before his death in 1966 at the age of 70, he received the longest ovation ever accorded anyone at the Venice Film Festival.

Keaton's movies are about a very ordinary young man of great resolution surviving in a world in which people (rival suitors, criminals, guerrillas) and things (collapsing houses, sinking boats, runaway trains) seem to be conspiring against him. As Marion Meade makes clear in her painstaking biography, Keaton was a comic genius who distilled his doubts and miseries into films that are as hilarious as they are beautifully crafted.



Keaton . . . surviving in a world of sinking ships and runaway trains

Born in 1895 to a pair of feckless music hall entertainers, Joseph Frank Keaton had a traumatic childhood that left him physically and mentally bruised. He received his nickname "Buster" when at the age of 18 months he survived a fall downstairs at a theatrical lodging house. His brilliance as a clown made him the family meal ticket. From the age of four, he became the centre of an act that turned on his drunken, brutal father throwing him around the stage and often into the audience.

The on-stage violence and the off-stage neglect of their son's education led to a running battle between the Keatons and the NSPCC, which for a while had them banned from New York. Eventually, Buster broke with his exploitative parents to join a Broadway revue and then to enter the movies as a sort of trainee with the comedian Fatty Arbuckle. But he continued to support his hopeless family throughout their lives.

Except for a few months in France at the end of the first world war, Buster was absorbed in film-making from 1917 to 1929. With the coming of sound, Buster's style of silent miming was no longer in demand. He was also nearly broke due to the Wall Street Crash and the extravagance of his wife, Natalie, one of the fabulous Talmadge sisters, who had been raised by their ambitious mother to despise and exploit men. She achieved immortality by appearing in Keaton's masterpiece Our Hospitality (1923). But having denied Keaton sex for some years, eventually took him for everything he had in an acrimonious divorce.

Keaton was no model husband or father, and his increasingly aberrant behaviour during the 1930s contributed to his misfortunes. Low points included a disastrous second marriage to a psychotic nurse, bouts of DTs and visits to detox centres, including a period of confinement in a straitjacket. But a third, happy marriage began in 1940, and in presenting the last 35 years in greater detail than any previous biographer has, Meade brings out the truly heroic side of Keaton. In the face of neglect and humiliation, he never stopped working including appearances in Sunset Boulevard and Limelight (his only collaboration with Chaplin, who paid him a miserly $1,500 for three weeks' work).

The story ends with the Venice ovation and his burial at Forest Lawn cemetery, a rosary in one pocket, a deck of cards in the other.

Future without context

Dan Glaister

Excession
by Iain M Banks
Orbit 451pp £15.99

THERE is a problem with Excession, the new "Culture" novel from Iain M Banks. Remove the letter "M" from the author's name and this book would be at the centre of some sort of a stir: respectful reviews in the books pages, extended interviews, profile writers dispatched to report on the author's habitat. But the "M" gets in the way.

Plain Iain Banks is a respected writer of macabre, witty, slightly skewed contemporary fiction. His debut, The Wasp Factory, was, as they say in the blurbs, acclaimed. The follow-ups garnered good notices and he was established as a fresh, sophisticated voice.

But this is not Iain Banks. This is Iain M Banks. Same person but a very different proposition. Iain M Banks writes science fiction, and SF, with its trashy spaceship covers and its lurch into hyperreality, is not "proper" writing. It is not the sort of activity a serious writer should pursue. And serious writer is the label attached to Iain Banks.

This is the fourth of Banks's Culture series. For him, the Culture is a vast playground where he can indulge his more far-fetched fantasies. But like the best playground games, there is a serious moral behind the screaming and the laughter.

There is screaming and laughter aplenty in Banks's Culture. The baddies in Excession are the Affront, a nasty, tentacled bunch whose idea of fun is to play squash with a specially bred species of squirming animal that screams every time it is hit. For extra fun, the eyes are gouged out before service. Ranged against the effrontery of the Affront are the AhForgetIt Tendency, not much help in times of crisis, and the main mass of the Culture.

The Culture is a pretty advanced society that knows it and is happily smug about it. In this universe, the living is easy and the humans are in control. Well, the humans think they are in control, but the real brains behind the Culture are the Minds, vast spaceships with a nice line in laconic understatement.

Without a trace of embarrassment, hulking great warships carry names such as The Jaundiced Outlook, Fate Amenable To Change, Honest Mistake, Attitude Adjuster (bristling with weapons and a bad enemy), Shoot Them Later and Anticipation Of A New Lover's Arrival.

The smugness is shattered by the arrival of the Excession of the title. The Excession is what Banks terms an Outside Context Problem. An OCP runs something like this: you are an efficiently run civilisation and the trains run on time, when on the horizon there appears an inexplicable entity, bigger and better than anything you could have dreamt of. Uh-oh.

The preoccupations of Banks's science fiction are earthly ones. The Special Circumstances section of the Culture, unsurprisingly, is involved in betraying everything the society stands for. It is with only mild surprise that the reader discovers that at least one of the beings involved in the novel's only love scene is not human, nor even humanoid. Banks is a great player of games; his aliens are very human. It comes as a relief to discover that in his sparkling future aliens, androids and humans still get drunk, spit on the floor, and possess a compelling range of profanities.

Three shattered lives

Laura Tennant

The Dream Mistress
by Jenny Diski
Weidenfeld & Nicholson
186pp £15.99

JENNY DISKI relishes paradox and her new novel, The Dream Mistress, is full of it: the aphrodisiac power of the scent of another woman on a lover; the terrible and unforeseen consequences of a miracle; why the photograph of a younger self, far from confirming a personal history, serves to sever the viewer from it. Disjunction, indeed, is the key word in the lives of her three, loosely connected female characters, all of whom live in a permanent present tense which admits of no past or future.

The Dream Mistress is an interesting mixture of surrealism and sound psychological premise. Mimi is abandoned by her father and then her mother as a small girl and, never having been offered love, is unable to feel it. Her relationships come to an end because she doesn't believe in them in the first place, thus fulfilling her own prophecy that nothing can last and the future is always uncertain.

Her inability to remember her dreams is an index of her incapacity to build a self which exists in time as well as space. Instead of narrative, there is atmosphere: either the terrifying void of her childhood nightmares, or the Buddhist disengagement, of her adulthood. Mimi's impressive and amoral sexuality is the instant gratification of a life lived instant by instant.

Mimi's mother, Leah, accomplishes the same precarious memoryless existence not through sex but through religion. Although Jewish by birth, after the trauma of her husband's departure she flings herself into Catholicism. Her heretical faith, however, is not in God but in his absence, a space she fills moment by moment by continually calling the divinity into life through the utterance of His name in prayer. Just once, she unwittingly summons a real presence which mysteriously saves the life of an asthmatic child.

Bella is the book's most shadowy and emblematic figure. When her face is destroyed by an explosion she is adopted by a man who somehow divines in her shattered features his Platonic missing twin.

Bella, once again robbed of past and future by her horrific injuries, is installed by her devoted lover in a white-walled, mirrorless house, where she spends her days waiting for his evening arrival. His adoration is an exemplar of the love so absent from the rest of the book — selfless, profound and voracious in its intensity — and Bella rejects it.

Worldwide web of help

Mark Cocker

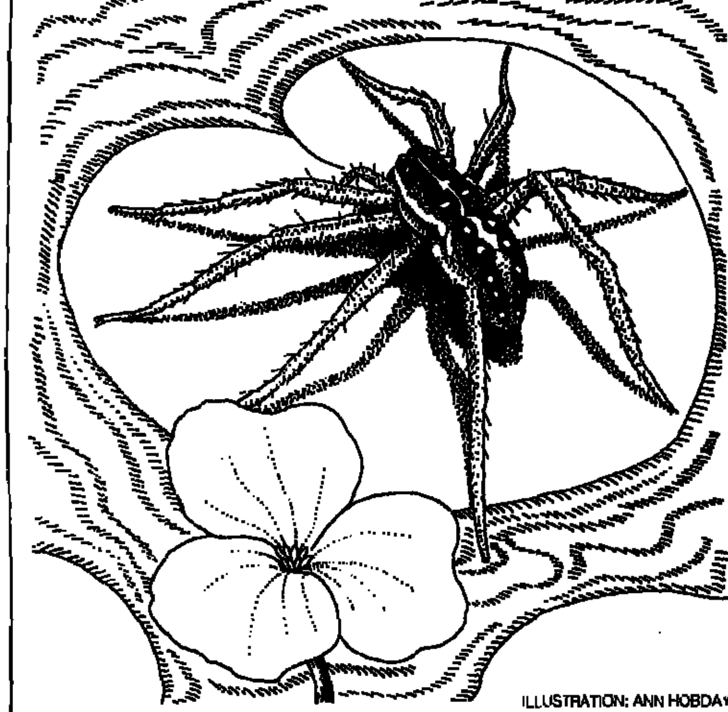


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

NOWADAYS it is common practice for environmentalists to launch a new campaign with what are known as "flagship" species. By reducing complex scientific issues to a simpler, more emotionally charged tale of one familiar, eye-catching animal, like an eagle or big carnivore, campaigners are able to generate publicity and open purse strings far more effectively.

One might think, however, that when members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust selected *Dolomedes plantarius* as their "flagship" they made an unusual choice. For, while it is a fascinating predator, it is also Britain's largest spider and the stuff of many arachnophobes' worst nightmare. Although it is possibly in danger of extinction throughout Europe, some ungenerous souls thought the great raft spider far too unattractive to warrant special concern. Unfortunately, they lost sight of the more important picture, which was the wonderful wetland site the spider inhabits.

Redgrave and Lopham Fen, in the county of Suffolk, is one of only two sites in Britain where *Dolomedes* occurs. This alone makes the place of national importance, but Redgrave has been host to another 120 rare wetland animals. A further important feature is the way the ground water stored in chalk aquifers rises upward under pressure to the fen surface. Such spring-fed habitats support an unusual community of plants.

When I visited recently I could sense something of Redgrave's special status. Electric blue damselflies, luxuriating in the hothouse conditions created by newly mown rides, danced ahead of me. Yet, as I moved so they jerked away just out of reach, as if invisible threads choreographed their whole eccentric performance. Sedge warblers dashed between tall belts of vegetation, and on a small patch of open water I came upon a single raft spider, its forelimbs resting on the pool's meniscus as it waited for the vibrations made by approaching prey. Surrounding its miniature aquatic world was the soporific purr of turtle doves, broken occasionally by sharp snorts as the reserve's ponies stopped their quiet grazing to shake themselves free of flies.

Although all seemed perfect on this sunny afternoon, both the reserve and its famous spider have been under siege since the 1950s, when a regional water company sank a borehole and started drawing off supplies for local households. Meantime the river running through Redgrave was also deep-dredged. The impact of these changes was to lower the water-table and cause Redgrave gradually to dry out.

If the use of *Dolomedes* as a flagship species didn't achieve the usual expression of public sympathy, then at least one aspect of the campaign was more typical. The scheme devised for Redgrave's restoration involves a range of government bodies, environmental groups and businesses — the type of partnership that is becoming common and signals an increasingly innovative approach to environmental issues.

Essex and Suffolk Water, owned by a French multinational, has agreed to re-site its Redgrave borehole, while the water company, the British government's Environmental Agency and the European Union have all made financial contributions to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's $5.4 million Redgrave project.

The whole rescue mission has one final inspiring element, which comes, of all places, from the wetlands of Poland. "Konik" ponies, an ancient breed closely related to Europe's original wild horses, are renowned for their toughness and indiscriminate appetite, including the rank vegetation currently smothering Redgrave. The future of the reserve and of Britain's largest, most vulnerable spider now depends on this unique, international alliance.

Chess Leonard Barden

NIGEL SHORT recently described the Karpov-Kamsky Fide match taking place in Elista as a "bogus world championship", but that is a simplistic view.

For all its problems, the International Chess Federation (Fide) has the authority which comes from its 70 years and a membership of more than 100 nations. And, despite Short's views, Karpov's match with Kamsky has similar authority, not least because both are survivors of a three-year cycle of eliminators.

Meanwhile Garry Kasparov's rival Professional Chess Association (PCA), which organised his title defences against Short in 1993 and Anand in 1995, has lost its sponsor Intel and is unlikely to acquire another.

Kasparov is unbeaten in matchplay, but if the PCA can no longer afford to run elimination contests or title matches, then it, too, must be regarded as bogus and his status will increasingly depend on his No 1 spot in the world rankings. Even that will be undermined in the next few weeks if Karpov continues to outscore Kamsky as clearly as he has done in their early games.

There is still talk of a $5 million, 100-player knock-out world championship in December 1996, financed by Japan or Vietnam. If, to counter objections, the competition shrinks to 16 or 32 players and allows for longer matches, then it seems likely that most of the top GMs will compete. Short should look to it as a chance, bogus or not, to revive his own title ambitions.

Kamsky-Karpov, 6th game

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 Karpov lost game two and won game four with his favourite Caro-Kann 1 . . . c6, so he spoils the Kamsky camp's homework by testing a reserve defence which he has played previously.

3 d4 Nxe4 4 Bd3 d5 5 Nxe5 Nd7 6 Nxd7 Bxd7 7 0-0 Bd6 8 Nc3 Qh4 Nxc3 9 bxc3 0-0 is the book line, when White can make his own aggressive queen sortie 10 Qh5.

9 g3 Nxc3 10 bxc3 Qg4 11 Re1+ Kf8 Still pre-game analysis. Black chose Kf8 in a Spanish game earlier this year.

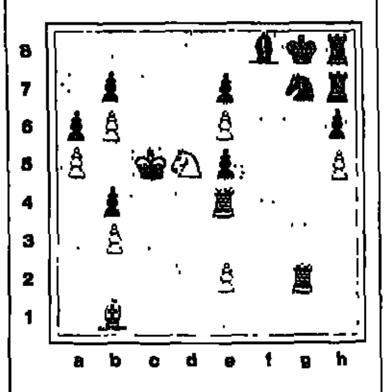
12 Be2 Qf5 13 Rb1 b6 14 c4 dxc4 15 Bxc4 Re8 16 Be3 Bc6 17 d5 Bd7 18 Bf1 h6 19 c4 Re7 20 Bd3 Qf6 White is snugly castled while Black's king is stuck in the centre, but White can't easily make progress as there are no knights for infiltration at c6 or b5.

21 Kg2 21 Be2 planning Ba4 is met by Qc3, but 21 Rc1 Ke8 22 Bc2 and Qd3-h7 looks stronger.

Ke8 22 Bc2 Qc3 23 Bb3 Kf8 24 Rc1 Qf6 25 Bc2 Rae8 26 Qd3 Bg4 27 Bd2?? 27 Qh7 g5 is unclear. Instead, Kamsky misses a simple tactic.

Re2 28 Rxe2 Rxe2 29 Rf1 Rxd2! 30 Resigns. Winning the house. If 30 Qxd2 Qf3+ 31 Kg1 Bh3 32 Be4 Qxe4 33 f3 Qf5! when White loses his rook or is mated after 34 Re1 Bc5+ 35 Kh1 Qxf3+.

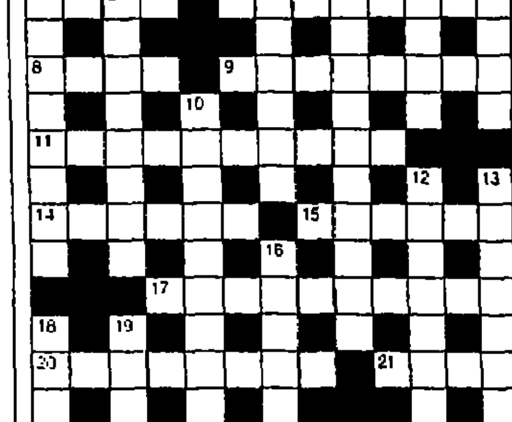
No 2429



White mates in six moves, against any defence (by S Nikolaev, 1994). The Problemist magazine (£15 for six issues from 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham GL52 4QA) quotes this intriguing puzzle where Black has no legal moves and the mate arises from a single well-hidden line of play.

No 2428: (a) Rxb4 2 Qxd8+ Kh7 3 Qg5! Rxb3? 4 Qh5+ and 5 Qxf7+ (b) Rd3 forces a K+P ending (c) Rd2! 2 Nxc6 Rxf2+ 3 Kxf2 Rd2+ 4 Kg1 Qe1+ 5 Rf1 Qxg3+ and mates.

Quick crossword no. 322



Across

1 What dogs do — about trees (4)
3 Perfect — finish (8)
8 Prickling (4)
9 Chaos (8)
11 Of animal life (10)
14 Jacket — made of hemp? (6)
15 Glass bottle (6)
17 Set menu (5,5)
20 Menu with choice (1,2,5)
21 Row (4)
22 Gift (8)
23 Legend (4)

Down

1 Snowstorm (8)
2 Calculated (8)
4 Source (6)
5 Organised spreading of information, rumour etc (10)
6 Whirlpool (4)
7 Merit (4)
10 Completely different (5,5)
12 The greater number (8)
13 Investigation (8)
16 Very drunk (6)
18 Measure — a patio (4)
19 Mend — damn! (4)

Last week's solution

CONSIDERATION
P T I O R A
SPAR LIBRETTO
O E E I A H
INTWOMINDS
E M O V
ENIGMA CANCEL
T R I N
ANACTOFGOD
L N S A L M
FINISHED IRON
M T O E N U
METEOROLOGIST

Bridge Zia Mahmood

I DON'T know if there's such a thing as a fairy godfather, but if there is, then Hans Melcher fulfils that role as far as Dutch bridge is concerned.

Hans is a wealthy businessman who dreamed that the Dutch national team could one day be world champions. So he hired the best coaches and provided the best training programme that money could buy.

When in 1993 the Netherlands beat Norway in the final of the Bermuda Bowl, his dream had come true.

Melcher continues to provide Dutch players with wonderful bridge in wonderful settings, and I was recently invited to form part of a team to play against the current Dutch side.

The match took place in a medieval castle that could only have belonged to a real-life fairy godfather.

In such surroundings it is not always easy to play perfect bridge, especially when you are suffering a little from jet lag.

Take the East cards above and see if you can do better than the champion player who held them at the time:

North (dummy)
♠ K J 7 6 5
♥ 10 4 2
♦ J 10 8 4 3
♣ None

East (you)
♠ 4 3 2
♥ Q 9 7
♦ K 6
♣ A K Q 10 7

This has been the bidding at love all:

South	West	North	East
			1♣
1♠	2♥	4♠	5♥
5♠	No	No	No

West, your partner, leads the king of hearts, on which you play the seven to show an odd number. He next leads a low heart to your queen, declarer following suit. What do you lead to the third trick? I hope you said a trump, because the full hand is at the top of the next column.

If you do not play a trump at trick three, South will make 11 tricks with the ace of diamonds and no fewer than ten ruffs! If you play a trump, he must fall a trick short since he can establish neither a long club nor a long diamond, and he cannot score five ruffs in each hand.

North
♠ K J 7 6 5
♥ 10 4 2
♦ J 10 8 4 3
♣ None

West
♠ None
♥ A K J 8 6
♦ Q 9 7 5 2
♣ J 9 6

East
♠ 4 3 2
♥ Q 9 7
♦ K 6
♣ A K Q 10 7

South
♠ A Q 10 9 8
♥ 5 3
♦ A
♣ 8 5 4 3 2

I trust you did not let your partner down. If you did, your task might have been easier had you asked yourself why partner had taken the apparent risk of underleading his ace of hearts at the second trick. Obviously, he wanted you to be on lead at trick three, so wanted you to do something he could not do himself. If the required defence was three rounds of hearts, or two rounds followed by a club or diamond switch, he could do that perfectly well on his own. But he could not play a trump. Trying to see the hand through partner's eyes is always good technique — even in fairyland.

Cycling Tour de France

Indurain survives the Alps

William Fotheringham

EVGENY BERZIN, the precocious Russian prodigy who toppled Miguel Indurain in the 1994 Tour of Italy, finally came of age last weekend in the Alps, entering his adopted Italy in the leader's yellow jersey on Monday.

The race was perfectly poised for another showdown in the massive mountain stage to the Sestriere ski resort, though snow and gusting winds forced Monday's stage to be shortened.

The blond Russian's experience of the Alps last year was mostly gained from within his team car after he quit. This year has been different altogether. On Saturday Berzin merely observed, in as much comfort as is possible while riding 125 miles over three mountains in pouring rain, while Bjarne Riis's Telekom team took the race apart and Indurain suffered his worst few minutes in any of the last six Tours.

By Saturday evening Berzin led the race but there was no margin for error. Remarkably, after almost 1,000 miles' racing, Abraham Olano of Spain, the current world champion, was in the same time, and the Russian held the yellow jersey only because he had finished 0.16sec ahead of Olano in the prologue time trial a week earlier.

Behind these two the top 10 — including men with healthy Tour pedigrees such as Tony Rominger, Piotr Ugroumov, Riis and Richard Virenque — were covered by 1min 2sec. The sensational stage left the yellow jersey very much up for grabs.

Sunday's mountain time-trial, up the valley road from Bourg Saint Maurice to Val d'Isère, was bound to shuffle the order again and so it proved. Berzin's victory was convincing but not enough to destroy the hopes of Riis, who confirmed the progress he made last year.

On Monday the race lead — Berzin's by a tenuous 43 seconds at the start — slipped away as Riis forged ahead over the Col de Montgenèvre to the Italian border and the climb to the finish at Sestriere.

With every mile the young Russian became less assured. Two miles from the finish it was Indurain who upped the pace to dispose of the young pretender, and the five-times winner followed that with an inexorable increase in tempo of the kind which proved so devastating in 1994 and 1995. Only Rominger, Luc Leblanc and Virenque could hold him. By the finish Riis was not far ahead and Berzin was grovelling a minute back.

In the most dramatic Tour since the LeMond victory in 1989, Indurain has put himself firmly back in the running for a sixth win.

William Fotheringham is features editor of Cycling Weekly

Slippery slope . . . Indurain feels the strain during last Sunday's individual time trial to Val d'Isère PHOTOGRAPH: PETER DE JONG

Cricket Third Test: England v India

England go to sleep after a feast of runs

Mike Selvey at Trent Bridge

THE game between England and India looked like petering out to a dull draw on Tuesday after both sides took two days each to amass huge first innings totals in the third Test, with Mike Atherton's men needing only a draw to win the three-match series.

It started well. India won the toss and their new young batting star, Saurav Ganguly, shone again, joining an élite band of players who have scored two centuries in their first two Tests. In the process he shared a record-breaking 255-run partnership with Sachin Tendulkar.

But after four days on a flat-top the two sides found themselves near enough on the same terms as they started. Once England had passed the follow-on figure with the last ball of Saturday's play the game was virtually condemned to a draw.

But so somnolent were proceedings on Monday that only 228 runs came from 91 overs. By the close the patience of the small crowd, unlike the batsmen's, was exhausted and they were reduced to jeering every run.

With the home side on 550 for seven in reply to 521, and no compelling reason why they should try to set up a grand finale, Atherton seemed likely to win his second series as captain and only England's fourth since 1985.

In an era where English cricket has slumped to the level of a butt for comedians' humour, that is no mean achievement. With the exception of the crazy, last-ditch defeat in Cape Town, England have not lost a Test since the third against West Indies 11 matches ago.

There was just a chance that England, on what remained an extremely good batting pitch and assuming they had the inclination, could have aimed for a reasonable advantage to put some pressure on India — if only to have the last word.

Instead, with batsmen finding no sort of touch against excellent seam bowling from Srinath and Prasad, the day was devoid of intent. Nasser Hussain was unable to continue his innings of 107, having fractured his finger in the last over of play on Saturday. But Atherton, who might have had ideas of converting his century into a double and perhaps beyond, instead scratched around for an hour, scored 15 more runs and was out for 160.

There was 45 from Graham Thorpe, although he failed to convince, and a pleasant debut innings from Mark Ealham, who at least showed some positive intentions in making 51 before spooning a catch to backward point.

Perhaps the most telling innings of the day, however, came from Graeme Hick, the peaks and troughs of whose Test career are beginning to resemble an Alpine stage of the Tour de France. Each time he struggles to the top and looks like pulling on the yellow jersey, he falls off his bike. This series has been an abomination for him, with scores of eight, one and six in the previous two matches followed by an excruciating 20 on Monday in two hours and 20 minutes.

Hick, with 87 first-class hundreds to his name, is regarded as the prime thunderbat in the England side. A year ago he scored a century on this ground and, with an orthodox stance and a declaration of toughness, he began to look the part.

This is Hick's sixth summer as an England player and in four of the previous five he has failed to make it through a complete series. Although he has been up against two superb bowlers in Srinath and Prasad, the looming prospect of Wasim, Waqar and the rest will make neither him nor the selectors sleep soundly.

India 521 (Tendulkar 177, Ganguly 136, Dravid 84); **England** 550-7 (Atherton 160, Hussain 107) after four days of play

Sports diary Mike Kiely

Roar power

AMID the usual delicacies on the Wimbedon menu of downpours disputed line calls and overpriced strawberries, "Tiger Tim" Henman provided Britain with a brie taste of Centre Court glory.

The unassuming 21-year-old was Britain's very own mouse that roared, earning his stripes thanks to victories over opponents of the calibre of French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov to claim a quarter-final place — the first British man to reach the last eight since Roger Taylor in 197.

Sadly, "Tiger Tim" bowed after a straight sets defeat by American Todd Martin, 7-6,7-66-4, but he provided evidence that Britain may at last be producing players capable of surviving in the jungle of Grand Slam tennis.

Switzerland's Martina Hingis became the youngest Wimbledon champion at 15 years and 282 days when she partnered Helena Sukova — at 31, twice Hingis age — to victory in the Women's doubles.

A CASE of tracks of my tears for Britain's Sally Gunnell as the Olympic 400 metres champion pulled up at a meeting in Lausanne. Having missed last year's World Championships because of an injury to her right achilles that eventually required surgery, Gunnell was this time left nursing her left leg.

Linford Christie was left in no doubt of the task facing him in the 200 metres when Frankie Fredericks ended Michael Johnson's 38-race unbeaten run in Oslo, beating the American in 19.82sec and registering his third Commonwealth record in 11 days.

MIKE Atherton has been re-appointed captain of the England cricket team for the Test and one-day series against Pakistan later this summer. Meanwhile the men's and women's games notched up a couple of milestones. In the County Championship match between Gloucestershire and Glamorgan at Bristol, the visiting team set a new club record when four batsmen — Stephen James, Hugh Morris, Matthew Maynard, and Tony Cottey — all made centuries in the same innings. New Road, Worcester witnessed New Zealand opener Debbie Hockley become the third woman to notch up four centuries for her country, in the second Test against England. Hockley joins England's Enid Bakewell and India's Sandja Agarwal in this exclusive club.

COLIN Montgomerie won the Irish Open at Druids Glen after Andrew Oldcorn threw away the title on the last green. Overnight leader Oldcorn knew what he had to do when he reached the par-four 18th, Montgomerie having already posted a 68 for a five-under total of 279. But he took three to reach the green and then another three putts to leave Monty holding the trophy.

FRIENDS old and new arrived from foreign fields as the countdown to the new football season began. The transfer market reflected the burgeoning financial pull of the Premiership as Italian *Serie A* stars Fabrizio Ravanelli and Roberto Di Matteo joined Middlesbrough and Chelsea respectively.



Ravanelli . . . bound for 'Boro

Following his sudden departure from Galatasaray, Graeme Souness surfaced in Southampton, promising to distribute some much needed Turkish delight at the South Coast club — in contrast to the more abrasive style of management he had practised at Rangers and Liverpool.

ALL IS definitely not well at Ferrari in the run-up to this Sunday's British Grand Prix. Following the engine trouble that had ruled out Michael Schumacher's participation at Magny-Cours at the end of last month, the Italian team's racing director Jean Todt had an offer of resignation turned down. Meanwhile Schumacher has been immersed in intensive testing at Monza in an attempt to put behind him the series of mechanical failures that have dogged his defence of the title.

THE self-styled Dark Destroyer of British boxing, Nigel Benn, went out with a whimper rather than a bang in the fourth round of the World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight title fight against Ireland's Steve Collins. The 32-year-old from Ilford was forced to retire after twisting his right ankle.

TIM HENMAN wasn't the only Bachelor Boy wooing the Wimbledon faithful. With the storm clouds putting a dampener on the Centre Court atmosphere, who should pop up with a little knight music but Sir Cliff Richard. With backing from a group of lady players, the eternally youthful singer plundered his back catalogue to keep the punters in Summer Holiday mood.

Shiv Sharma is on holiday